A CONCISE HISTORY

OF THE

Introduction of Protestantism

INTO

MISSISSIPPI AND THE SOUTHWEST.

BY REV. JOHN G. JONES,

OF THE MISSISSIPPI CONFERENCE OF THE M. E. CHURCH, SOUTH.

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PREFACE.

In the earlier years of my ministry I often felt a wish that some one would collect and preserve the leading facts connected with the introduction of Protestant Christianity into Mississippi and the Southwest, as a starting point for the future ecclesiastical historian of our country; but I wished in vain, until more than a half century of my life had elapsed. What made it still more desirable that some one competent and trustworthy should undertake the task was the fact, that nearly all the actors in, and cotemporaries of, the scenes to be narrated were dead, and hence the few fugitive pieces that appeared in the religious periodicals of the different Churches — being written mostly by persons only transiently in the country — were exceedingly meager and erroneous. While reflecting on the subject with painful anxiety, it often occurred to my mind that, as many of my ancestors were among the principal actors in the scenes to be narrated, and were themselves part of the early history of the Church in this country, I was, perhaps,

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the only person living who either could or would furnish the requisite materials for the future historian. Accordingly, about the year 1858, I commenced a series of numbers on the subject, which were published in the New Orleans *Christian Advocate*, embracing twenty-seven in all. Deeming myself wholly incompetent to write a readable and useful book, I had no thought of attempting it at the time of writing those numbers for the *Advocate;* but having been frequently solicited to do so, both by oral and written importunities, I determined to make the attempt, if, in the order of Providence, I should ever have sufficient respite from the active duties of the ministry to accomplish it. The circumstances of the terrible war now raging between the Northern and Southern States of the once United States of America having circumscribed my pastoral labors to very narrow limits, affording me more leisure for writing than I could ever again expect to have, and, moreover, my advanced age reminded me that what I had to do in this, as well as in all other sublunary matters, must be done quickly. As soon, therefore, as I could dispose of other matters that seemed to have a prior claim on my time and attention, I betook myself to the task, and the following pages are the result of my labors. In re-writing my original sketches I have discontinued the epistolary

style, have introduced a few additional facts and biographical sketches, corrected some typographical errors, given the introduction of each branch of the Church separately and according to priority of date, and extended the narrative to a later period. If I have been instrumental in preserving valuable materials to go into the history of the churches hereafter, and have added anything substantial to the pleasure and profit of my readers, I shall feel fully compensated for my labor.

J. G. JONES.

Fayette, Mississippi, Feb. 1863.

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INTRODUCTION OF PROTESTANTISM

INTO

MISSISSIPPI AND THE SOUTHWEST

CHAPTER I.

Captain Amos Ogden obtains a grant of land from George III, to be located in "the Natchez Country"—Takes Rev. Samuel and Richard Swayze in as partners—The grant located in 1772, and the Swayzes settle on it in 1773—Rev. Samuel Swayze organizes the first Protestant Church in Mississippi—Persecution of the Protestants by the Spanish Catholics—Indian troubles—The Church and settlement temporarily dispersed—Death of the old minister—The Indian troubles subside and the fugitives return to "the Jersey Settlement."

It is a matter of interest to all succeeding generations of Christians to know when, and by whom, Christianity was first introduced into their country. But if the question were now asked, "When, and by whom, was Protestant Christianity first introduced into what is now the State of Mississippi?" perhaps not one in a thousand of all the professors of religion among us could give a correct answer; and yet it is not too late for that question to be answered satisfactorily. The author of these sketches being a lineal descendant, by both his parents, from the families that first organized Protestant Churches in this country, has it in his power, not only from uniform family tradition, but also well-authenticated family records, to give at least a correct

outline of the history of those Churches. In doing this he may differ in some dates and facts from others who have attempted it, but he considers his sources of information more reliable than those of mere memory. Of the secular history of the country he will say but little, as that has been amply detailed by those who have written expressly on the subject. It is the religious phase alone which he wishes to bring to view. From 1763 to 1779 the province of West Florida, including what was then called "the Natchez Country," was under the British Government. The fertility of the soil and the salubrity of the climate of the Nathez District of the Province, in addition to its being bordered on the west by the great Mississippi river, made it very desirable to occupy the country by permanent English settlements. In order to secure this coveted object great inducements were held out by the Government to adventurers to remove to this tempting locality. Among the first who came was Amos Ogden, a reduced Captain in the British navy. On the 13th of May, 1767, George III, King of England, issued a mandamus to the Governor of His Majesty's Province of West Florida to "grant unto Amos Ogden, under the seal of the Province, 25,000 acres of land, and to have the same surveyed in one contiguous tract wherever the said Ogden or his attorney might choose." The conditions of the grant required the land to be located and permanently settled by a specified number of families. Captain Ogden finding himself unable to comply with the conditions of the grant without assistance from others, fortunately met, in the city of New York,

two wealthy planters from Morris county, New Jersey, by the name of Richard and Samuel Swayze (generally pronounced Swe-ze), to whom he sold 19,800 acres of his grant at twenty cents per acre, on condition that they would assist him in the selection of the land, and settle their proportion of families thereon. In the spring of 1772 Capt. Ogden and the brothers, Messrs. Swayze, came in person to the Natchez District and located their grant on the Homochitto river, in what is now the south-eastern portion of Adams county. This being accomplished, they returned to their former homes, and in the following October the Messrs. Swayze chartered a schooner and, with their families and connexions, consisting mostly of their married children, set sail from the port of Perth Amboy, in the State of New Jersey, for their new home in the Southwest. After a tedious and perilous voyage, having touched at Havana de Cuba, they landed at Pensacola, where they discharged the schooner. They there provided themselves with a suitable number of open boats, in which they embarked with all they had in the way of personal property. They followed the line of coast westward to Lake Borgne, through which they passed into Lake Pontchartrain, and from thence, through Lake Maurepas, up the Amite river, and through the Pass Manchac into the Mississippi river; and from thence they ascended the opposing current of that majestic stream, by slow and toilsome stages, to the mouth of the Homochitto, and, following the sinuosities of that river up to their grant, landed in time to raise corn in 1773. They settled near what was afterward known as Kingston, and formed what is still known as the "Jersey Settlement." For the sake of

mutual protection from hostile Indians, they at first settled in the form of a village on a creek, which from thence took the name of "Town Creek," which it still retains. Their little farms lay scattered around contiguous to the village. Did it comport with the main design of this book, much might be said that would be interesting to the descendants of these early settlers about their privations, hardships, and exposures to hostile savages; but these things, for the present, can only be incidentally alluded to in order to give prominence to the main object of these historical sketches. Rev. Samuel Swayze, one of the original owners and settlers of the famous Mandamus Grant, was a Congregationalist minister, and had sustained the pastoral relation in that Church from early manhood. As the birth of his children dates back to 1733, it is likely that he had been a minister of the Gospel thirty or forty years previous to his removal to the "Natchez country." Most of his family and connexions who came with him were probably members of his Church in New Jersey. Soon after their arrival at their new home in the wilderness they were regularly organized into a Congregationalist Church, and Mr. Swayze took charge of them as their pastor until his death, in 1784. He was, beyond doubt, the first Protestant minister that ever settled in what is now the State of Mississippi, and his Church was the first Protestant Church ever organized in this country. From some documents in my possession, I see that our Baptist brethren claim to have been the pioneers of Protestantism in "the Natchez country;" but in this they have been evidently misled, as I expect to show in subsequent chapters of this book. Rev. Samuel Swayze and his little

flock had to endure many hardships, privations and dangers in their wilderness home—one of the most appalling of which was the stealthy and repeated incursions of hostile Indians. Several of the new settlers were killed by them, among whom was Mr. Core, a grandson of Richard Swayze. These troubles had not abated when, in 1779, the English Government over the province was superceded by that of Spain, and Roman Catholicism was declared by law to be the only allowable religion of the land. The voice and hand of persecution were soon raised against Mr. Swayze and his little Church at Kingston, and their religious privileges were greatly abridged. Diligent search was made for Protestant Bibles and religious books, and whenever they fell into the hands of the priests or their emissaries they were committed to the flames. Mr. Swayze, in order to secure himself and his Bible from the inquisitorial grasp of the Catholic hierarchy, retired to a canebrake on the margin of a small stream and fixed him a seat in the hollow of a large sycamore tree, where he often sat to read the Holy Book, and where he kept it concealed from the eyes of his persecutors. From thence this stream took the name of "Sammie's Creek," which name it yet bears to perpetuate the Christian name of this patriarchal minister. His regular appointments for public worship had to be abandoned, and only an incidental sermon preached when it could be done safely. An agreement was made between the minister and church-going people, that, when there was no apparent cause of alarm, a person designated was to pass through the settlement on Sabbath morning with a cow's horn, which he was to blow at intervals—as a hunter would

do—as a signal to assemble for public worship. The people went timidly and stealthily to the house of prayer, with the understanding that if any suspicious persons were reported as being in the neighborhood, they were to disperse immediately. This was a sore trial to these Protestant families who, through all their previous years, had been accustomed to worship God according to their understanding of the requirements of the Holy Scriptures, with none to molest or make them afraid. About 1780 the Indians became so annoying to the settlers on the Mandamus Grant that they were compelled to remove temporarily to St. Catharine creek, near Natchez, where Rev. Samuel Swayze and his wife died about 1784, and were buried on a high ridge of land that jutted out to the water's edge, on the Mississippi river, just below old Fort Rosalie, at Natchez. The grave-yard has long since caved off into the river, so that the remains of the venerable minister and his wife have been literally

"Carried downward by the flood,
And lost in following years."

This information the writer obtained, when he was pastor of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in 1834, in Washington, six miles from Natchez, from Jas. Swayze, a grandson of the old minister, who said he had been familiar with current events around Natchez for sixty years.

By 1786 the alarm about the Indians had, to a great extent, passed away, and most of the settlers returned to their former homes on the Ogden Grant. A son of the deceased pastor—who was gifted in public prayer and exhortation, but who was never ordained, nor, perhaps, even regularly licensed to preach—took the over-

sight of the Church, hoping that a regular pastor might be obtained before long; but he did not survive his father many years, so that the little flock was left "as sheep without a shepherd," and was never again organized as a Congregational Church. Thus began and ended the first Protestant Church in Mississippi. Its history evolved extraordinary trials from without, but there was peace and unity within. Its career was short, and its end as an ecclesiastical organization final; but not so the fruits of its existence. Through its venerable pastor and its spiritual membership the good seed of the kingdom of Heaven had been sown in a fertile and well-prepared soil. The rising generation of an extensive and influential family connexion had been "brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." In addition to a large number already gone to rest in Abraham's bosom, many more are on the way, manifesting in all the details of probationary life "the unfeigned faith that dwelt" so conspicuously in their godly ancestors. After the introduction of the Baptist Church in this country, a few of the connexion — having married into Baptist families—united with that Church; but the great majority, from some cause, did not seem inclined to affiliate with that denomination, but considered themselves still members of the Congregational Church, though without a pastor, until the Methodist itinerants began to organize churches in the country, and then they as readily united with the Methodist Episcopal Church as though they had been trained up under its auspices. Many of the descendants of the original grantees yet live on, and in the vicinity of, the Mandamus Grant, while many others are scattered over Mississippi and Louisiana, and

some have gone to more distant localities. A fair proportion of the connexion yet retain the name of Swayze; but many of the females having married into other families, their descendants are known by the names of Coleman, Callender, Corey, Farrar, Fowles, Fowler, King, Luse, Hopkins, Griffing, Jones, etc. It is cause of devout gratitude to God that the descendants of this first Protestant Church in Mississippi yet worship in a fine brick edifice, which they have erected near the site of the first settlement on the Mandamus Grant. In a subsequent chapter the writer will take the liberty of individualizing some of the descendants of this pious ancestry; but, as their personal religion and ardent zeal in the cause of Christ were mainly conspicuous after their union with the Methodist Episcopal Church, he will defer it until he comes to speak of the introduction of that form of Christianity into our country.

CHAPTER II.

Introduction of the first Baptists into Mississippi—Errors committed by the annalists of that Church—Its organization fixed at a date too early—Reasons why the author believes his account is correct—Immigration of the first leading Baptist family to Mississippi—Difficulties by the way—Attacked by the Cherokee Indians on the Tennessee river—Loss of one boat and passengers—Effects of small-pox among the Cherokees—Debarkation at the mouth of Cole's Creek—Dangers surrounding their first settlement—Narrow escape of John Jones and family—Public worship instituted under necessary restrictions—The first buddings of a revival—Difficulties about admitting candidates into the Church—How settled—Persecutions by the Spanish Catholics—Immediate causes of it—A romantic marriage—An order issued for the arrest of Messrs. Curtis, Hamberlin and DeAlvo—Their precipitate flight from the country.

The second Protestant denomination that made its appearance in Mississippi was that of the Calvinistic Baptists. In all the author has seen published on the subject, he discovers that the annalists of the Baptist Church have committed a variety of errors in attempting to give a history of their Church in Mississippi. This he attributes solely to the want of correct information on the subject, which it was not in their power to obtain at the time and place of writing. Some of these errors will now be briefly noticed.

1. They confound Richard Curtis, senior—who was not a preacher—with his fifth child, Richard Curtis, junior, who was the first Baptist preacher in Mississippi, and hence they represent their first preacher as being quite an old man with a large family when he emigrated to this country. This is a mistake. Richard Curtis, senior, *was* an old man with a large family at the time of his removal, but his son, Richard Curtis, junior, the first Baptist minister in Mississippi, was at that time a young man only about twenty-five years old, with a small family.

2. Two of their annalists—who seem to have derived their information from the same source—affirm that the Baptist Church "was the first Protestant community formed in all the wide region of the Southwest, below the Cumberland settlements in Middle Tennessee." This is also an error, for, as has been shown in the preceding chapter, Rev. Samuel Swayze, with his Congregational Church in the Jersey Settlement, had preceded them about ten years.

3. They are also at fault in fixing the time when their first church, under a regularly ordained minister, was organized. The prevalent opinion seems to be that it was in 1795 or 1796. If they date the institution of their Church from the time the Baptists first established social worship in Mississippi, they may fix it as early as 1781, soon after the landing of the Pilgrims at the mouth of Cole's Creek. Or if they date it from the time that Wm. Hamberlin, Stephen DeAlvo and others were admitted into their communion by immersion, administered by an unordained preacher, they may fix it as early as 1791 or 1792, and the author can see no reasonable objection to this under the stress of circumstances as then existing. The organization was not complete, according to the "faith and order" of their Church, but it was as perfect as uncontrollable circumstances allowed it to be. But if they date the original organization of the first Baptist Church in Mississippi from the time of its regular and formal institution by Mr. Curtis as an ordained minister, they cannot fix it earlier than the spring of 1798, for the Spanish Government did not terminate in the Natchez District of the Province of West Florida until the 30th of March,

1798; and such was the avowed and uncompromising hostility of the Catholics to the Baptists that we can not believe they would have permitted the organization of a regular Church while they had authority to prevent it, unless it could have been without their knowing anything about it, which is not probable. Moreover, Mr. Curtis fled from his relentless persecutors on the 23d of August, 1795, and did not return to the country until after the supercession of the Spanish Government, March 30, 1798, so that, allowing him time to receive the information in South Carolina that the United States Government was established in the "Natchez Country," and that he might return in safety, and then time to make the circuitous trip by the way of Tennessee on horseback, it must have been quite in the summer of that year before he was at home and ready to complete the organization of the Church. This is the substance of all the information the author has as to the *time* when the first Baptist Church was planted in Mississippi, and he believes it is about all that can be obtained at this late date. It is, however, as he believes, fully reliable. While he does not claim exemption from unintentional mistakes, his information on this point being derived from reliable sources, may be received as correct. For the satisfaction of his readers it may be well for him to refer briefly to his available sources for correct information:

1. He is a lineal descendant, on his father's side, from the emigrant family that constituted the first Baptist Church in Mississippi. 2. He is familiar with the uniform family tradition in relation to the facts he narrates. 3. He has in his possession reliable family

records dating back one hundred and twenty years. 4. He found upon the blank leaf of an old book several dates referring to the time of Mr. Curtis being ordered by the Spanish Commandant at Natchez to desist from preaching, his banishment from the country, the termination of the Spanish Government, etc., in the handwriting of his venerable grandfather, John Jones, which were, no doubt, made at the time the events referred to occurred. 5. He was born and raised, and still lives, in the vicinity where this first Baptist connection settled in the country. 6. He has often, in his younger years, conversed with many aged persons, who, in their youthful days, were "part and parcel" of the scenes herein brought to view. We will now proceed with the main object of this chapter.

About the year 1743 there lived in Dinwiddie county, near Petersburg, in Virginia, a newly-married couple, of Welsh descent, by the name of William and Phebe Jones. Mr. Jones soon after died, leaving a young widow and an only son, by the name of John. Within a few years after the death of her husband Mrs. Jones married the man who will hereafter be known in these sketches as Richard Curtis, senior, by which marriage they had five sons and three daughters. After the marriage of Mrs. Jones to Mr. Curtis we have no very satisfactory knowledge of the family for about thirty years. In the meantime John Jones, the son of Mrs. Curtis by her first marriage, had grown up to manhood, and on the 28th of June, 1768, had married Miss Anna Brown, daughter of Abraham Brown. At the breaking out of the Revolutionary war the family was found in South Carolina, on Great Pedee river, not far from the mouth of Black

river, and about sixty miles from Charleston. At the Declaration of Independence John Jones ardently espoused the cause of the Revolutionists—served in three campaigns against the British and tories, under that indomitable partisan warrior, Captain, afterward General, Francis Marion, and was in several battles, including the siege of Charleston. His stepfather and half-brothers, doubtless, took part in the war, but precisely what their services were can not now be ascertained. By the close of 1779 Mr. Jones and the Messrs. Curtis—including his stepfather and half-brothers—had rendered themselves so obnoxious to their tory neighbors, by their devotion to the Colonial cause, that they found their situation not only vexatious, but perilous. In the meantime several of the leading members of the family had embraced religion and joined the Baptist Church, among whom were John Jones, William, Benjamin and Richard Curtis, and their wives; John Courtney, who had married Hannah Curtis, and John Stampley, who had married Phoebe Curtis, daughters of Richard Curtis, senior. We may safely presume that the elder Richard Curtis and his wife were also members of the same Church, but of this the writer has no certain knowledge. Richard Curtis, junior, was at the time of which we write a licensed preacher. While the family were constantly annoyed and imperilled by the horrors of the war at their very doors—their property nearly exhausted, and but little prospect of better days near at hand; and having heard much said about the salubrious climate, rich lands, exhaustless range and abundance of game in the far-off "Natchez country;" and being oppresed in mind, as well as in their outward

circumstances, they determined to seek a peaceful home far to the westward, quite beyond the vexations and dangers of the bloody war still in progress throughout the United Colonies. Accordingly, early in the spring of 1780, they mounted their wives and small children, with their scant supply of clothing, tools and furniture, on pack-horses—the men traveling on foot, with their hunting apparatus, to kill game by the way—and proceeded across the country to the Holston river, in the north-eastern corner of Tennessee, where they paused during the summer to build their boats and to raise a crop of corn, preparatory to their desent, by water, to the "Natchez Country." When the water had attained a sufficient depth for navigation, toward the close of the year, they, with other emigrant families, embarked their all of earthly substance on three large and well-built flat boats, and committing themselves to the protection of God, started on their perilous voyage.

Such were the natural difficulties in the way of navigation in those early times that it was, at best, a hazardous undertaking to descend the Holston, Tennessee, Ohio and Mississippi rivers in such water craft as they were then able to construct; but what made it doubly hazardous was the belligerent stand which the Cherokee Indians had taken against all emigration through their country. They often availed themselves of the narrows, shoals and sudden turns in the Holston and Tennessee rivers to attack immigrant boats. Our voyagers, being fully aware of that fact, went as well prepared for it as their limited resources would allow, and kept a constant watch for the approach of their stealthy foe. We who have, until lately, generally had "peace and truth in

our days," think it strange that our pious forefathers would thus not only peril their own lives, but also the lives of their wives and little ones; but they had already become inured to the horrors and dangers of war, and viewed such adventures very differently from what we do. These emigrants, for the sake of mutual protection, had agreed to float as near each other as they conveniently could. The foremost boat contained Richard Curtis, senior, and his immediate family, including John Jones and family, and his own sons and daughters with their families. The second boat contained two brothers by the name of Daniel and William Ogden, and a man by the name of Perkins, with their families, most of whom were Baptists. We have no record of the names of those in the third boat. They seem to have fallen in with the other boats for the sake of protection in descending to Natchez. The voyagers in the last-named boat had in some way contracted the small-pox, and, to prevent the contagion from spreading to the other boats, they were required to float a few hundred yards in the rear and to occupy a different landing at night. After floating unmolested for several days, the hostile savages espied the boats somewhere near the mouth of Clinch river, and fixed on a short bend in the Tennessee river, near the north-western corner of Georgia, as the place of attack. Having to float near the shore to keep in the channel, the foremost boat was violently assailed by the lurking Cherokees. All hands on board commenced a vigorous and well-directed defense. That her husband might be released to use his rifle on the assailants, Mrs. Jones put her eldest son, William, then in his twelfth year, at the oar, while she held up a thick, poplar stool

between him and the bullets; and it was well she did, for it was pierced by one of the leaden missiles. After the danger was all over, Mrs. Jones laughingly remarked that "their guns were very weak, as they did not make a very deep impression on her stool." Another lady heroically took the steering oar from her husband that he might ply his rifle on the foe, and, with unfaltering courage, guided the boat until disabled by a wound in the back. Hannah Courtney was grazed on the head by a ball, and Jonathan Curtis was slightly wounded on the wrist, but, so far as the writer knows, no life was lost. While the attention of the assailants was mainly directed to the first boat, the second floated by the point of attack unharmed.

The excited and blood-thirsty savages now directed their whole force to the capture of the third and last boat, and as it was passing through the narrows they boarded it in full force and massacred all on board except one lady, whom they retained as a captive about three years, until, by treaty, she was restored to her friends. But this was a dear-bought victory to the Cherokees, for, either from the captured lady or the clothing and other articles taken from the boat, they contracted the small-pox, which passed through their villages like the destroying angel, until multitudes of them died. When suffering from the raging fever and thirst occasioned by the terrible epidemic, they sought relief by lying in the waters of the Tennessee, which only made it the more fatal. Their descendants have, to this day, a traditional horror of that terrible pestilence. It was impossible, from the slow and unwieldly movements of their flatboats, for those who had escaped

to round to and land time enough to afford the captured boat any assistance, even if they had not been so far outnumbered as to render the attempt worse than fruitless; so, with gratitude to God for their deliverance and sadness and lasting sorrow for their lost fellow-voyagers, they pursued their dangerous way until they landed in safety at the mouth of Cole's Creek, about twenty miles above Natchez by land. To the eastward and southward of their place of debarkation they mainly made their first settlements in the country, within ten or twenty miles of the Mississippi river. For several years they had to endure many privations and hardships incident to a new country but poorly supplied with even the necessaries of life. Further to illustrate the privations and dangers attendant on the early settlement of this country, the writer will be excused for noticing several characteristic incidents connected with the family of John Jones. Immediately after they made land at the mouth of Cole's Creek, while the women and children remained temporarily on the boats, the men went out through the adjoining country in search of suitable locations for their future homes. Mr. Jones selected a place on the east side of the southern fork of Cole's Creek, not far from the former site of the now extinct village of Uniontown, and nearly opposite the present residence of Mr. Wade Harrison. Here he found rich land, luxurious range, the greatest abundance of beach and oak-mast for hogs, a plentiful supply of game in the woods and fish and water-fowl in the creek, with plenty of spring and creek water convenient for man and beast. He soon put up a log cabin, cut and burned the cane

and undergrowth from a nice piece of rich and level land, felled trees on the spot, made rails, and fenced it in, and, by doling out a scanty supply of seed-corn by the grain, soon had it planted and in a state of cultivation. In the meantime ordinary provisions were very scarce; for a time bread was not to be had, but Mr. Jones, with his trusty rifle and with but little effort or loss of time, kept his family supplied with game, principally venison and wild turkeys. The turkeys Mrs. Jones baked dry and called bread, the venison she boiled and called meat. These delicacies, with an occasional mess of fish fried in bear's oil, were the staple of their living for an indefinite period.

By a little after mid-summer Mr Jones found his circumstances much improved. He had a couple of horses, a start in the way of hogs and a few head of cattle, among which was one cow that gave his family a moderate supply of milk. His luxurious corn was getting into roasting ears, and had already been tasted with great delight by the children; and had it not been for the proximity of the stealthy, thieving and murderous Indians he might have felt that "the lines had fallen to him in a pleasant place, and that God had given him a goodly heritage." But this was the absorbing trouble. The settlement on the Ogden Grant was breaking up and concentrating around Natchez for protection. Already the bands of roving savages had given unmistakable evidence of their intention to depredate on the Cole's creek settlements as soon as the prospects for plunder became sufficiently inviting. In view of the threatening danger the settlers were vigilant in their reconnoisances, and had an understanding among them-

selves that he who first discovered the probable presence of hostile savages should immediately give the alarm to his nearest neighbors, and they, in turn, to others, until the whole community should hear of the impending danger. In the meantime the women and children were to be taken immediately to Natchez and placed under the protection of the small garrison at Fort Rosalie, while the men were to return and punish or drive off the Indians, as circumstances indicated. Mr. Jones came near being overtaken in his new home by a band of these lawless marauders. Having evidence of the presence of Indians in the neighborhood, and not knowing at what moment they might make their attack, he requested his wife to take the children and hide among the spurs of the cane-ridges, near the creek, until he could get the horses ready for their escape to Natchez. Mrs. Jones, after hastily collecting a few articles of wearing apparel, took her children and fled to a place of concealment; but moments seemed to her as hours in her lonely retreat. "What can keep Mr. Jones so long? Is it not possible that he is already tomahawked or captured?" were questions that incessantly revolved in her mind. She could bear the painful suspense no longer; she must go near enough to see, and, instructing the older children to take care of the younger and to be quiet, she ventured to the crest of the ridge and was greatly relieved at seeing her husband in the act of starting. She turned hastily back to get the children ready, but in the excitement of the moment she missed her way, so that it was with difficulty she found the place of their concealment by the time her husband came up. They made good their retreat to Natchez that

night, and early next morning Mr. Jones and John Courtney, his brother-in-law, returned as scouts to reconnoiter. When they got near his improvement they saw that the Indians had broken down a large portion of his corn, which was just getting into roasting-ears, and had killed his only milch cow. Venturing a little nearer they saw them in the act of emptying the feather beds, which had been brought all the way from South Carolina, to avail themselves of the cases. Seeing they were too far outnumbered to risk an attack they retreated.

Mr. Jones immediately abandoned his frontier settlement and removed to Fairchild's creek, near the Mississippi river, where he built a water-mill and did the grinding for the community many years. These incidents are given as specimens of many more that might be recorded, but as their narration is foreign to my main object, they will be passed over without further detail at the present time. It has already been stated that most of the prominent members of this emigrant connexion were members of the Baptist Church before leaving South Carolina, and, judging from the unwavering fidelity and zeal which they manifested in all their wanderings and privations, their religion was that of the heart. They were regular in their family devotions from their first settlement in the country, but the Spanish Government—which only recognized the Roman Catholic form of worship, and forbid all others—having lately taken under its jurisdiction the Natchez District, they scarcely knew what to do in regard to public worship. After mutual consultation they agreed to meet together in their private dwellings, at set times, for the purpose of reading and expounding the Scriptures, exhortation and

prayer, hoping in this way to keep the members united and alive to their spiritual interests. These meetings, which were found to be so profitable to the members of the Church, soon attracted the attention of the American portion of the population, many of whom desired to be present and enjoy once more the quickening and hallowing influences of Protestant worship. Thus things went on through a series of years without exciting much open opposition from the Catholic authorities. Richard Curtis, senior, died November 10, 1784, and by this time his son Richard had become quite a preacher. John Stampley, the brother-in-law of Richard Curtis, junior, was quite gifted in exhortation, as was also his brother, Jacob Stampley, both of whom afterward became Baptist preachers. William Curtis, an elder brother of Richard, was gifted in extemporaneous prayer, as was also John Jones and several others. By 1790 other American settlements desired to be visited by Mr. Curtis and his lay assistants, and their labors were soon blessed in the manifest awakening and conversion of souls. Among the first converts was a prominent citizen by the name of William Hamberlin, and a Spaniard, who had married an American lady, by the name of Stephen De Alvo, both of whom desired admission into the Church. This brought up in the minds of these pioneer workmen in the Lord's vineyard a very difficult question for solution. "Who could administer the ordinance of baptism according to the faith and order of the Church?" Mr. Curtis was only a licentiate, and was not authorized, according to the rules of the Church, to administer baptism, and yet here were persons desiring the ordinance, who exhibited all the usual evidences of true conversion.

They prudently postponed the matter until they could correspond with the parent Church in South Carolina, from whose authority they held their letters of church-membership. In the meantime the young converts were recognized as candidates for membership in the Church, and were properly cared for and encouraged in the discharge of all their Christian duties.

The Church in South Carolina, upon receiving the interesting communication from the "Natchez Country," immediately took the subject under advisement, and returned as their answer "that there is no law against necessity, and under the present stress of circumstances the members ought to assemble and formally appoint one of their number, by election, to baptize the young converts." This advice was promptly acted on, and Richard Curtis was duly appointed to administer the ordinance, which he accordingly did, not only in the cases of Hamberlin and DeAlvo, but in sundry other cases, both of men and women. To avoid being detected by the Spanish Catholic hierarchy, the ordinance was, at least on one occasion, administered at night by torch light. But "a city that is set on a hill can not be hid." The movements and successes of these early Mississippi Baptists became more and more public. Meanwhile the opposition from the Catholic authorities, which had been on the increase for some time, now broke out into a blaze of persecution, and the little pioneer band of Protestants were peremptorily ordered to "desist from their heretical psalm-singing, praying and preaching in public or they would be subjected to sundry pains and penalties." For a time Mr. Curtis and his adherents, in and out of

Church, thought the American feeling was strong enough to sustain them, and, moreover, believing their cause was the cause of God, and that truth must ultimately triumph over error, bid their opponents defiance, and even went so far as to have their places of worship guarded by armed men, while they denounced in no very moderate terms the "image worship" and other unscriptural dogmas and ceremonies of the Catholic Church. The author does not pretend to say that their zeal was always well tempered with knowledge. In common parlance, they were uneducated men, plain, both in language and manners, and, perhaps, they sometimes imprudently provoked the ire of their enemies. By the commencement of the year 1795 several circumstances had transpired to stir up the wrath of the Catholics against this little band of primitive Baptists. Not only had William Hamberlin and other prominent citizens joined their Church, but Stephen DeAlvo, a Spaniard and a Catholic by birth and education, had renounced the faith of his ancestors and gone over to these heretics, as they called the Baptists. This could not be endured in silence! They had the legal authority as well as the power to crush out this growing brotherhood of anti-Catholics, and it must be done! Accordingly, the Spanish Commandant at Natchez, Don Manuel Gayoso de Lemos, wrote an expostulatory letter to Mr. Curtis, urging him to desist from what was considered violative of the laws of the Province and against the peace and safety of the country. To this letter Mr. Curtis replied with characteristic bluntness and severity, giving him to understand that, in the name and strength of God, he was deter-

mined to persevere in what he had deliberately conceived to be his duty.

His immediate arrest was now ordered, and on the 6th of April, 1795, he stood a prisoner before Governor Gayoso. At the close of the investigation he was assured if he did not unequivocally promise to desist from all public preaching he would be sent, with several of his adherents, especially Hamberlin and De Alvo, to work in the silver mines of Mexico. Whether the hitherto indomitable spirit of Curtis quailed under the menaces of Gayoso, or whether, upon a review of the whole matter, he thought it would be more Christian-like to submit to the "powers that be," the writer is not prepared to decide. Be this as it may, he did promise to refrain thereafter from what was in open violation of the laws of the province. An edict was also issued by Gayoso, "that if nine persons were found worshiping together, except according to the forms of the Catholic Church, they should suffer imprisonment." After being discharged Mr. Curtis felt oppressed in mind, as he thoughtfully and prayerfully returned to his home on the south fork of Cole's Creek. "Had he done right in promising not to preach the gospel of peace and salvation publicly in the Province? What would become of the membership if their public religious meetings were discontinued? Would they not be scattered as sheep without a shepherd? Had he set them a good example of fortitude in the face of danger?" These and kindred questions which arose, one after another, in his mind were difficult of solution. He felt an assurance that he had aimed to do right, and the predominant conviction of his mind was that he had done the best he could in his

circumstances. His liberty and life were worth something to his family—to the little Christian brotherhood he had gathered around him, and to the future prospects of the Church. Had he proved stubborn and refractory before Gayoso—being already a prisoner—he might have been ordered forthwith to the calaboose preparatory to his being sent to work in the Mexican silver mines. His brethren generally approved his course, but thought some arrangement ought to be made to keep up their religious meetings. Things now went on quietly for a while, but the American population had increased by the arrival of other emigrants, and they were becoming more and more clamorous for religious, as well as civil, liberty. The members of the Church had a meeting for consultation, and after patient deliberation they came to the conclusion that it was not right to give up their religious meetings entirely. It was true Mr. Curtis had promised to abstain from public preaching, but still they might *hold meetings*, with such as would not betray them, for Christian conference, prayer and exhortation. Accordingly they agreed to hold their meetings as secretly as possible, and conduct all their religious exercises in a low tone of voice; and, in order to make things doubly secure, they appointed reliable men as sentinels on all the roads leading to their places of worship, whose duty it was to come in at any stage of the meeting and report the appearance of any suspicious persons in the distance, which should be considered the signal for an informal and immediate dismissal and dispersion.

Thus matters were successfully managed for two or three months, when an additional circumstance, characteristic of the times, came to light, which greatly en-

raged the priesthood and Spanish officers. David Greenleaf, an accomplished young gentleman from the North, had gained the heart and hand of Miss Phebe Jones, daughter of John Jones; but such was their sense of the wrongs inflicted on the connexion by the Catholic hierarchy that they resolved not to be united in marriage by either priest or Spanish officer. They, moreover, believed that Richard Curtis, the uncle of Miss Jones, being a preacher of the gospel, was as duly authorized in the sight of God to solemnize the rites of matrimony as any one else, and made application to him accordingly. He consented, with the understanding that all the preliminaries, including the marriage ceremony, were to be conducted as quietly as possible, and kept a secret as long as was consistent with truth and honor. But no one, not even the parents of Miss Jones, were willing to risk the consequences of having the marriage performed in their house. So arrangements were made for Mr. Greenleaf to go, on the 24th of May, 1795, with a few select young gentlemen — including Jonathan Jones, the father of the writer—to the village of Gayoso, which was situated on a bluff of the Mississippi river, about eighteen miles above Natchez, and procure the license from the proper officer, who was probably an American, and sympathized with that class of the community. Then, considerably after night fall, he was to be found on the road, two or three miles south of Greenville, going in the direction of Natchez. In the meantime the bridal party, including Mr. Curtis, were to be taking an evening ride in the opposite direction, and, lest some traitorous person might accidentally fall in with either party, they agreed upon a sign and countersign:

the bridal party giving the sign when they met amid the darkness of night, and the other party returning the countersign in case all was well; but if any suspicious person had fallen in with either party, they were to pass in silence. At the appointed time and place the parties met, and one of the bridal party announced the mysterious word, but there was no response, and they passed without recognition. The young men could not forego the pleasure of a little innocent amusement in connection with a wedding, so they had determined to have it at the expense of the bridal party. "Who on earth can they be?" inquired one in a suppressed tone. "It's them," said another, "and something has happened." A settled gloom was coming down on that lovely young bride and her party, when the mischievous young gentlemen wheeled suddenly about and gave the countersign. The parties alighted near the residence of William Stampley, on what is still known as "Stampley's Hill," and by torchlight, under the wide-spread boughs of an ancient oak, the marriage ceremony was duly performed, which was concluded by an impressive prayer offered up by Mr. Curtis, long talked of by those who were present. The parties remounted, the light was extinguished, and each sought concealment in the privacy of home. Of course the marriage was not long kept a secret. Mr. Greenleaf was a machinist, and the young men in his employ soon came to a knowledge of the fact that he was a married man, and through them it soon became known that Mr. Curtis had officiated at the hymenial altar. A numerous, intelligent and pious posterity is the result of that remarkable wedding.

Mr. Curtis' participation in this affair, and the cur-

rent rumors that he had violated his pledge to desist from preaching, and was actually holding secret meetings with his people, re-aroused the fury of the Catholics, and they determined to strike a decisive and final blow at the ringleaders of this little Protestant community. That Mr. Curtis ever violated his pledge, by preaching, in the ordinary acceptation of the term, the writer has no evidence; that he did take part in the social meetings of the Church is not denied.

The officers of the Provincial Government—instigated by the priesthood—made diligent inquiry as to the time and place of holding their meetings for exhortation, prayer and Christian intercourse, and devised plans for the capture of Messrs. Richard Curtis, William Hamberlin and Stephen De Alvo. Orders for their arrest were secretly issued on, or just previous to, the 23d of August, 1795. The 23d of August was a quiet Sabbath, with all of its holy associations inviting the devout worshipers to assemble at the house of prayer. It was the private residence of one of their number, in what was then and is still known as "Stampley's Settlement," on the south fork of Cole's Creek.

The pickets had been properly posted on all the roads, and the little persecuted fraternity of Baptists were, in subdued tones, conducting their worship, when the sentinel on the Natchez road came in hurriedly and announced the appearance of five men, which he took to be a Spanish officer and his *posse*. The religious exercises closed immediately, and Messrs. Curtis, Hamberlin and DeAlvo hastened to a neighboring thicket to conceal themselves, knowing that they were peculiarly obnoxious to the hierarchy at Natchez. The others

adjusted themselves with apparent carelessness about the house and yard, when the unwelcome visitors rode up and, with characteristic self-importance, inquired, "What are you all doing here?" They replied, "We are not harming anybody; we always suspend our secular avocations on the Sabbath, and either rest at home or spend our time in such intercourse with each other as suits us." "We wish to see Dick Curtis, Bill Hamberlin and Steve DeAlvo—either one, or all of them; where are they to be found this morning?" authoritatively inquired this embodiment of Papal intolerance, to which an evasive answer was given, such as, "We don't *exactly* know—*somewhere* in the neighborhood, we suppose." The officer then announced the fact that he had come with orders from Governor Gayoso to arrest those three rebels, preparatory to their being sent to work in the silver mines in Mexico for the remainder of their lives, and if any man should be found aiding and abetting either their concealment or escape, he should suffer the like penalty. After further expressing his determination to capture them at any expense of time and labor, he set out immediately with his *posse* on a diligent search for the fugitives, and, in the language of the venerable Mrs. Elizabeth Armstrong, who still survives, considerably in advance of eighty years old, and who well recollects the search for Curtis and his two companions, "For a number of days they reminded me of children playing hide and seek, such was the activity and minuteness of the search."

It now became the settled conviction of the most reliable men in the community that it was worse than useless for Mr. Curtis and his two faithful adherents, Ham-

berlin and DeAlvo, to think of breasting that storm any further—that their only safety was in a precipitate flight from the country, and, consequently, from all that was dear to them on earth. "But whither shall they fly?" was the next question, and the ready answer was, "To South Carolina, the former home of Mr. Curtis." The horrors of the Revolutionary War had long since passed away—the reign of "peace and truth" had been re-established on the Great Pedee; here they could support themselves by the labor of their own hands, while among congenial associates they could enjoy their Christian privileges, with none to molest or make them afraid. Accordingly, as soon as suitable horses could be procured—amidst the tears of wives, and children, and weeping relatives—they clandestinely left the settlement, with the understanding that they were to conceal themselves at the house of a friend on Little Bayou Pierre, near where Port Gibson now stands, until they could be supplied with suitable provision, in clothes, food and money, for their journey through the wilderness to South Carolina. In the next chapter will be related the principal incidents connected with their flight and return.

CHAPTER III.

Painful emotions of Messrs. Curtis, Hamberlin and De Alva on leaving their Families—Their purposes and hopes—A ray of light—An unexpected difficulty—Chloe Holt—A dark day on Coles's Creek—Journey of the Refugees—Arrival on Great Pedee—Time, how spent—Mr. Curtis ordained—Spanish Government in the Natchez District superceded—The Baptists immediately build a Church—The Refugees return—Thrilling incident in the Church on the appearance of Mr. Curtis in the Pulpit—Constitution of the first regular Baptist Church—Piety of early Baptists—Death of Elder Curtis and his wife—William and Bailey Chaney—Harigail—Hannah—Rapid spread of the Baptist Church—Rev. Thos. Mercer—"Mercer's Hymns"—Rev. David Cooper—Agencies employed to extend the Church—Salem Church: its rise, and the causes of its decline and fall—Irrelevant and injurious controversies about Free Masonry—Campbellism.

The three refugees all had families, and their forced separation from wives and children was inexpressively painful to their hearts as husbands and fathers, but no other alternative promised them any security from the malice of their persecutors, and, committing their all to God, they bowed to their fate. Why they had fallen into such sore trials was not for them to decide. They had an abiding consciousness of having aimed to do right. They had not desired to wrong either the Provincial Government or the Papal hierarchy. Their sole object had been to worship God and do good to their fellow men, according to their understanding of the Holy Scriptures. God knew their hearts, and would judge of them accordingly. The path of duty, though crowded with difficulties, was the only path of safety, and, by the help of God, they would constantly endeavor to walk therein at all hazards. If they were faithful, Infinite Wisdom would overrule all for their good and for the furtherance of the Gospel.

Amidst the surrounding gloom light was already

breaking in the East. The United States Government was now a fixed fact, and the Natchez District was claimed as having been included within the chartered limits of the colony of Georgia, and was now legally an integral part of that State, and would ultimately—perhaps in a short time—come under the Federal Government, when they would be permitted to return home in peace and safety and serve God in the way they conceived to be right, with none to molest them. Their families and neighbors hastily collected and prepared such supplies as they would need on their long and perilous journey through the various tribes of Indians inhabiting the vast region between the Natchez country and Georgia. Travelers' bread was made by a union of corn meal and bear's oil, and other articles were added in the way of food such as they could carry. All things being in a state of readiness, a new and unexpected difficulty sprang up. Not a man could be found willing to risk the penalty of "aiding and abetting" in the escape of the refugees. Their absence from home a single day or night might throw suspicion on them and lead to disastrous consequences; and the question was asked, with increasing anxiety, "Who will take their supplies to their place of concealment, on Bayou Pierre?" The question was soon answered. There lived in the vicinity a noble-hearted and daring woman by the name of Chloe Holt, who acted in the capacity of accoucheress for the settlement, and was every way suitable for such an adventure as was now on hand. Aunt Chloe had a kind and sympathizing heart, but an iron will—was determined and bold, and withal was a little eccentric. While she was all aglow to have the pleasure and honor

of conveying the needed supplies to the exiles, she wished to hit a back handed lick at what she considered the cowardice of the men in the neighborhood. "If the *men* in the neighborhood," said she, "are so faint-hearted that not one of them can be prevailed upon to take Dick Curtis and his companions in exile their promised supplies, in order to secure their escape from the clutches of these gospel-hating Catholics, if they will furnish me with a good horse, surmounted with a *man's saddle*, I will go in spite of the Spaniards, and they may catch me if they can." The families and friends of the refugees were glad to avail themselves of her generous offer, and a suitable horse was accordingly brought and saddled as she desired. All things being ready she made her appearance, dressed, cap a-pie, in gentlemen's clothes, and mounting the horse, in cavalier style, boldly dashed off. The journey was hastily and successfully made. She took the last sad farewell of the loved ones at home to the sorrow-stricken exiles, delivered them their supplies, gave them her blessing, and returned as she went. No one molested Aunt Chloe, and that adventure was her boast to the close of life. It is supposed she died and was buried in Warren county, somewhere about the head waters of Big Bayou. Could we find her grave we would make the effort to have a suitable monument placed upon it to perpetuate her name and noble deed to generations yet unborn. Whoever may, in future, write the history of the Baptist Church in Mississippi, let them not forget to make honorable mention of Chloe Holt. "Peace to your ashes," old friend, wherever they rest.

The 23d day of August, 1795, the day on which Mr.

Curtis and his companions in tribulation left their homes on Cole's Creek, was a dark day to the little Church in the wilderness. Their only available pastor had now been driven away from them. For a time—how long they knew not—they were not to see his face, receive his godly counsel or hear his fervent prayers. Hamberlin and DeAlvo, also—the first fruits of their prayers and faith in the Natchez Country—had to share the exile of their pastor. How dark and mysterious did all these things appear, not only to desolate wives and weeping children, and a bereaved Christian brotherhood, but also to the departing refugees. But the hand of God was in all this, as we shall presently see. Under the appropriate advice and encouraging Christian example of the Stampleys, John Jones and other experienced members of the Church, both male and female, the first impulses of grief and despondency at parting soon gave way to a more confiding faith and cheerful hope of better days to come. The general conclusion was, if possible, to live nearer to God, so as to avail themselves of his constant protection, support and guidance. Soon after receiving their supplies by the hands of Mrs. Holt, the exiles began to move northward, threading their way along the old Natchez and Cumberland trace, fording or swimming the smaller streams, making rafts of logs to ferry themselves over the larger rivers, sleeping on the ground at night, with the sky for a covering, until they arrived in the white settlements northeast of the Indian country. In process of time they got to the former home of Mr. Curtis, on Great Pedee, in South Carolina, where they remained over two years and a half. Here their religious privileges were unrestricted,

and in spiritual matters they passed off the time profitable to themselves and others. Mr. Curtis was active and acceptable as a preacher, and during his sojourn there was regularly ordained by Elders Benj. Moseley and Mathew McCullans, and was duly empowered, whenever he should return to the Natchez Country, to constitute a Baptist Church according to the "faith and order" of that denomination. In the meantime the Natchez District was claimed as being within the chartered limits of Georgia, and, consequently, as belonging to the United States, and Col. Ellicott, with a suitable force, had been sent on by the General Government to enforce the claim, by negotiation if possible, if not, by force of arms. After many vexatious delays, under a variety of pretexts, Col. Ellicott had to assume a belligerent attitude, and promptly inform the Spanish Commandant if he did not evacuate Fort Rosalie by the 30th of March, 1798, he would reduce it by bombardment, and placed his ordnance about where the lower end of Main street in Natchez now is for that purpose. The Fort was evacuated before day that morning, and during the day the Americans took possession of the works. While this much-desired event was verging to maturity, the Baptist community on Cole's Creek were not idle spectators. They had resumed their meetings for public worship under the leadership of the Stampleys, Harigail and others. They had written to their long-banished brethren in South Carolina to return home, and expectation was on tiptoe to hail their arrival. With light hearts and buoyant hopes they commenced their homeward journey. Now they could sing,

"In all my ways Thy hand I own,
Thy Ruling Providence I see."

Mr. Curtis had improved much as a preacher by associating with his elder brethren in the ministry, and by the frequent opportunities he had of preaching to different congregations; in addition to which he had obtained ordination, and was now duly authorized to complete the organization of his Church in Mississippi, and to administer the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Hamberlin and DeAlvo had also been much improved in religious knowledge and experience. To avoid the Seminole and Creek Indians, they took the usual route by the way of Middle Tennessee, and then turning southward through the Chickasaw and Choctaw Nations. Already a rude Church had been built of logs in Stampley's Settlement, and furnished with pulpit and seats. It was Saturday night, and Messrs. Curtis, Hamberlin and DeAlvo, were within half a day's ride of home. At early dawn they resumed their journey, thinking it no harm to travel a little on Sunday under such circumstances. They separated, and each was making for his home, when Mr. Curtis fell in with cheerful companies of former acquaintances on their way to "the house of prayer." They assured him that he would not find his wife and children at home, for by that hour they were certainly on their way to Church, so he turned with the company to the house of God. When they arrived at the Church, Mrs. Curtis, with her household, had not yet made their appearance, but he was assured that all were well, and that they certainly would soon be there; and as the hour for preaching had come the brethren insisted on his going immediately into the pulpit and preaching them a sermon. He submitted, and while, with his head depressed below

the book-board, he was turning to his hymn and text, his wife came in, unobserved by him, and quietly took her usual place by the wall. The congregation being mostly within doors—and waiting one for another—no one gave her an intimation of the presence of her long-exiled husband. When he rose up she looked at the pulpit to see who was going to officiate, and seeing it was her own beloved, long-lost, but now restored, husband, it was more than her womanly heart could endure in silence. She shrieked and swooned away, and was borne from the house in an unconscious state. Cold ablutions were resorted to, and consciousness soon returned; and the cordial greeting and soothing words of her husband soon quieted her nerves. All returned to the Church, and Elder Curtis—as we shall henceforth call him—preached an appropriate and feeling sermon. This incident the writer obtained more than twenty years ago from our former fellow-citizen, John I. Stampley, son of Rev. Jacob Stampley, who was then a lad, but being present, retained a most vivid recollection of the exciting scene.

The dark and menacing clouds of persecution had now passed away, and all was light, and love, and joy, in that little Protestant brotherhood. On the return of Elder Curtis to his home in the Natchez Country the voice of the oppressor had ceased in the land. The Stars and Stripes had been thrown to the balmy breezes that fanned old Fort Rosalie, and liberty of conscience was proclaimed to all. Our hitherto oppressed and down-trodden Baptist community met in Conference, and, under the superintendence of their beloved Elder Curtis, who presided as Moderator, they completed

their organization "in due and ancient form," as a regular Baptist Church. This, as we have shown in a previous chapter, could not have taken place earlier than the summer of 1798. Their first Church was called Salem, *i. e.*, *peace*, and stood among the upper branches of the South Fork of Cole's Creek, in Jefferson county, on what is still known as "the Salem road." Their usual place for immersion was in Harper's Fork, a little to the south of the Church.

Arrangements were already in progress for the establishment of a Territorial Government in Mississippi, which were soon matured, and from thenceforth the Church had peace and protection from Papal oppression. The author, however, did not set out to write a history of the Baptist Church in Mississippi—for which he is wholly incompetent—but only to record the facts and dates of its original implantation and early progress. He has felt it due to the general cause of truth, as well as the fair fame of worthy ancestors, who were the principal actors in the scenes described, to correct errors already extant, and to rescue from impending oblivion interesting facts and dates that ought to be known to posterity. If ever the history of this branch of the general Church in Mississippi is correctly written, honorable mention will be made of Elder Curtis and his worthy coadjutors, who breasted the opposition and persecution of the Papal hierarchy for nearly eighteen years. With many of them the writer was well acquainted in his boyhood, and had then, and still has, the most exalted opinion of the depth and uniformity of their personal piety, which had been nurtured in storms, and was as firmly rooted as the mountain oak.

So far as the author knows, they almost universally prayed in their families evening and morning, and were strict observers of Christian decorum in all the details of life. Elder Curtis died October 28, 1811, at the house of a friend on Beaver Creek, in Amite county, where he had gone to seek medical relief from a cancer that occasioned his death. Inquiry has been made for his grave, of late years, in view of placing a suitable monument on it, but it has not been found.

"His ashes lie, no marble tells us where
With his name no bard embalms or sanctifies his song."

But his record is on high! He was a plain, honest, unsophisticated man, a sincere and spiritual Christian, and an uncompromising and zealous preacher of the Gospel. If he was very pointed and plain spoken at times in the pulpit, his manner suited the rough work he had to do.

His wife, "Aunt Pattie," as she was familiarly called by the connection, survived as a hale old lady until about 1818 or '19. She died in Jefferson county and is buried on the plantation of Mrs. Samuel Bolls, two or three miles east of Fayette.

Within the year immediately preceding the evacuation of the Natchez District by the Spanish Government, and pending the negotiations between the representatives of the United States and those of the Court of Madrid, there was a great deal of ill-feeling between the adherents of the two Governments, and also between the Protestants and Catholics. Believing the day of their freedom from Papal rule to be near at hand, the Baptists began to rally their forces and to demand the re-establishment of their public worship. This state of

affairs brought to light several prominent members and licensed preachers of the Baptist Church not heretofore known in its history. Among them we find the names of William and Bailey Chaney, from South Carolina. William Chaney had been ordained a Deacon in the Church, and several persons desiring baptism before the return of Elder Curtis, he was appointed by the members to administer the ordinance, from which we infer that he was a man of gifts as well as grace. Bailey Chaney was a licensed preacher, and probably preached the first sermon in Natchez after the Spanish Government was superceded by that of the United States. Soon after the Spaniards left, the Americans erected a large bush arbor and supplied it with a temporary pulpit and seats, and invited Mr. Chaney to preach them a sermon under the "Stars and Stripes," which he did to an immense congregation. While we can not accord to our Baptist brethren the honor of establishing the first Protestant Church in the Natchez Country—that having been done, as we have seen in a previous chapter, by the Congregationalists—we cheerfully accord to them the honor of establishing the second, and of preaching the first sermon here under the United States Government. Another prominent Baptist of that day was a man by the name of Harigail, from Georgia, who, it is presumed, was a licensed preacher. He seems, from circumstances mentioned in connection with his history, to have been a warm-hearted, impulsive, bold man, and somewhat imprudent in the manifestations of his zeal. On one occasion, after denouncing the superstition and despotism of the Papal hierarchy, and exhorting his brethren to constancy in the face of all opposition from that

source, he quoted the following sentence from the epistle to the Hebrews: "Ye have not resisted unto blood striving against sin." This language was repeated to the priesthood at Natchez, and by them construed into insurrectionary designs against the Government; and an attempt was made to arrest and imprison Harigail, but he escaped, and was harbored for some time by a man, not a professor of religion, by the name of Morris Custard. Mr. Custard was accused of complicity in the escape of Harigail, and was imprisoned several months. There was another Baptist preacher by the name of John Hannah, who was conspicuous for his opposition to Catholicism about the winding up of the Provincial Government. But little is now known of him, except that he attacked Catholicism in a public discourse in Natchez, and afterward got into a heated controversy with some Irish Catholics, who gave him a beating. Mr. Hannah applied to the Governor for redress, but Gayoso believing he had brought these things on himself, by what he considered his imprudent zeal against the Catholics, ordered his confinement in the calaboose. This act of the Governor was construed, not only into an insult to Protestantism, but as an outrage upon the privileges of an American citizen, and so great was the excitement and so ominous the outbursts of indignation the day after, that Gayoso, with other Spanish officers and several Spanish families, were glad of an opportunity to take refuge in the fort until the threatening storm passed away. The preacher was released, and lived a number of years to enjoy his well-earned religious liberties. Mrs Elizabeth Osteen, wife of Thomas S. Osteen, who was for nearly forty years one of the most

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pious, talented and useful members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Jefferson county, Mississippi, was a daughter of his; and though he died when she was young, she retained a vivid recollection of his uniform piety and prayerfulness, and especially the interest he took in her religious instruction and personal salvation.

At the conclusion of the Provincial Government, the Baptists being already on the ground, and in a state of efficient organization, as well as zealous and active, soon had the privilege of seeing their hitherto persecuted and down-trodden Church, which had been planted and nurtured "in troublous times," spreading abroad in the land. Soon after the establishment of the Territorial Government in Mississippi, they received many valuable accessions by emigration from South Carolina, Georgia and Tennessee. About the year 1800, a second Baptist Church, called New Hope, was organized on Second Creek, in Adams county, and about the same time another near Woodville, called Bethel. In 1805 New Providence and Ebenezer Churches were established in Amite county. In September, 1806, these five Churches appointed Delegates to meet at Salem for the purpose of organizing an Association. From some cause the organization of the Association seems not to have been perfected until the next annual meeting of Delegates, which took place at Bethel, near Woodville, September 26, 1807. The minutes of the Association state that the "Association convened at Bethel Church, Bayou Sara, Mississippi Territory," from which we infer that Bethel Church was southwest of Woodville, on the waters of a small stream of that name, which afterward gave name to the town of Bayou Sara, at its mouth on the

Mississippi river. This Association was called "The Mississippi Baptist Association," and it adopted the Calvinistic creed in all its details, defined its powers, and agreed on sundry rules of order and decorum. From this time the denomination had encouraging success in every direction. New Churches were annually added to the Association, so that in 1813 eighteen Churches were represented; in 1815 the number had increased to twenty-four; in 1817, to thirty-six, and in 1818 forty Churches sent their Delegates to the Annual Association. The original Association having by this time become unwieldy, on account of its size and the extent of territory occupied by its Churches, took the preliminary steps, in 1819, to organize two other Associations, both of which met for the first time in 1820. The Union Association was duly constituted in September of this year, and the Pearl River in November. Some Baptists existed in Opelousas, Louisiana, as early as 1810, for in October of that year a petition was presented to the Mississippi Association from "certain brethren, and from a number of citizens in Opelousas, praying that Brother J. Willis be set apart, by ordination, to the work of the ministry;" whereupon Elders David Cooper and Lawrence Scarborough were appointed to visit the brethren in Opelousas and ordain Mr. Willis, if they, upon examination, should think it expedient. From some cause, now unknown, he was not ordained at that time, but he visited the Association next year, in session at New Hope, in Adams county, Miss., and was cordially invited to a seat in the body; and Elders Thomas Mercer and David Cooper were appointed to visit the members in Opelousas. In 1812

the Association appointed Elders Moses Hadley and Lawrence Scarborough to ordain Mr. Willis in Opelousas, and constitute a Church in the vicinity where he lived. Several other Churches west of the Mississippi river had been organized previous to 1818, but, except the one in Opelousas, they had not geographical names, and their location can not now be determined. On account of the great difficulties they had to encounter in attending the Association east of the river, they were dismissed from its jurisdiction and permitted to organize one in Western Louisiana, which was done in November, 1818, by the assistance of Elders Cooper, Courtney and J. Smith, from the Mississippi Association. From this time there was a regular exchange of associational messengers and letters between the two bodies. These few recorded facts, meagre as they are, show conclusively that the Louisiana Association was the legitimate daughter of the Mississippi Association.

The Baptists have been a zealous and progressive branch of the general Church in the Southwest from their first organization, so that now they have Churches and associations here and there, all over Mississippi and Louisiana. We have looked into the history of their progress and think we have learned what agencies, under the Divine blessing, have mainly contributed to their success. They had, at an early day, a fair supply of preachers, so far at least as numbers were concerned. It is true that many of them did nothing more than earnestly harangue the people on portions of Gospel truth and Christian experience; but their disjointed discourses, full of pathos and sympathy, and delivered in that peculiar cadence called, "the heavenly tone,"

suited the majority, and were the means of doing much good. A fair proportion, however, of the early Baptist preachers, were fully up to mediocrity, and some of them were men of superior education and commanding talents in the pulpit. Elder Thomas Mercer, whose name is often found in the minutes from 1808 to the time of his death, was a man who preached "in the demonstration of the spirit and of power." He was the revivalist of his day, the Boanerges of the Baptist Church in this country. There was generally a shaking among the "dry bones" where he preached. In those days hymn-books were very scarce and hard to obtain. To supply this material deficiency, Mr. Mercer made a selection of hymns suitable for private, family and public worship, and published them in pamphlet form and distributed them generally among the people, who sang them with much earnestness and good effect. Most of his hymns and choruses were appropriate for the use of all Christian people; but to some of them Pedo-Baptists would object, especially the one commencing,

"In Jordan's tide the Baptist stands,
Immersing the repenting Jews."

Doctor David Cooper came early in the present century as a missionary of the Baptist Church. His name first appears in the printed minutes of 1808. He was a man liberally educated, polished in his manners, and attractive and useful as an able minister of the New Testament. For more than thirty years he was a file-leader in building up and extending the Baptist Churches in Southwestern Mississippi. He was a warm advocate for a higher grade of ministerial educa-

tion than generally existed among his co-laborers. As early as 1817, as chairman of a committee appointed for that purpose, he presented a paper to the Association on the importance of ministerial improvement, that would read well as late as the present day. Another thing which contributed greatly to the edification and extension of the Baptist Church in those early days, when Bibles and other religious books were very scarce, was their pastoral circulars, which were annually printed with their Associational minutes, and distributed generally among the members and patrons of the Church. It is true there are some things in those official circulars to the Churches which Arminians and Pedo-Baptists would not subscribe to as Bible truth; but there is a great deal of solid truth on the subject of doctrinal, experimental and practical godliness set forth in those pastoral letters, well-supported by appropriate quotations from the Holy Scriptures, and doubtless they were a blessing to many. David Cooper, Thomas Mercer, Moses Hadley and David Snodgrass were generally depended on to write the annual pastoral letters to the Churches, until, at a later period, Elders James A. Randleson, Daniel McCall and other men of superior piety and learning became prominent among the Baptists in Mississippi. Another agency which contributed largely to the extension of the Baptist Church in early times was their itinerant preaching. The Association had no regular plan of itinerant preaching, such as we find in the Methodist Episcopal Churches, but most of the ministers kept up a sort of irregular itinerancy, that proved a great blessing to destitute settlements, and was the means of originating new Churches in various

places. In 1814 the Association formally resolved, "that it be recommended to, and enjoined on, the preachers of our order, that they use their utmost diligence in the practice of itinerant preaching." Many of those primitive Baptist preachers in the Southwest were a stirring class of men. They often made extra sacrifices and exertions, and turned out of the beaten track in order to preach the Gospel to the destitute; and verily they had their reward in the rich harvest of souls they were instrumental in gathering into the Churches.

These original Baptist Churches, however, did not enjoy uninterrupted peace and prosperity. In addition to opposition from without, they were often distracted by internal controversies. We do not suppose they were more inclined to heart and church divisions than other Christian people, but they seemed not to have the means of settling them so promptly and so permanently. The history of old Salem, the first Church, presents a sad and melancholy picture to the pious heart. After it had enjoyed about fifteen years of prosperity, and, about 1812–13, had been favored with the most extensive revival known in the country up to that date, differences of opinion grew up between some of the leading members, which led to ill temper and angry words, and finally were brought into the monthly conferences of the Church, where they were long debated, until parties were formed, and the membership was agitated from center to circumference. From that unnatural and unchristian feud we date the decline and ultimate downfall of the first Baptist Church in Mississippi. The faithful few struggled hard and long to maintain their

organization, but having no more revivals to recruit their numbers, and suffering diminution constantly from deaths and removals, they at last yielded to their hapless fate, and ceased the bootless strife. About twenty-five or thirty years ago the woodwork of the church edifice was accidentally destroyed by fire, since which time the brick walls have been gradually taken away for neighborhood purposes, until now nothing remains to designate the spot to the passer-by but the grave-yard, where reposes the dust of some of the best of our race. The descendants of several of the leading Baptist families still live in the vicinity of the old Church, but they are not Baptists, and too many of them are not Christians at all. In contrasting its present utter desolation with its former glory, an indescribable feeling of sadness comes over the soul. But the fruits of old Salem are not all lost. In her chivalrous days she sent out a number of vigorous colonies which yet live and prosper. But Salem was not the only Church that was distracted and torn asunder by these unholy feuds; for many others shared a similar fate. It would seem that some men can not consent to get along quietly with their associates in church-fellowship. They must have some debatable question before the Church in the form of a "query," or a "resolution," often wholly irrelevant, and something over which the Church has no scriptural jurisdiction, and about which she ought not to attempt any legislation whatever. Some of the most humiliating and disastrous divisions ever made in the Churches of our Lord Jesus Christ have grown out of exciting and long-continued controversies about non-essentials, or attempts made to extend their ecclesiastical jurisdiction

over subjects wholly beyond their legitimate control. We have a painful and admonitory instance of this in a controversy which prevailed in the second and third decades of the present century in many of the Baptist Churches in Mississippi, on the subject of Free Masonry. Instead of simply exercising discipline over their members in regard to their Christian faith, Church obligations and religious duties, an attempt was made, by Church legislation, to compel all the members who belonged to the Masonic Lodges to dissolve their connection with the Fraternity, and to prohibit others from joining it. Instead of looking on Freemasonry as a charitable institution, organized on Bible principles, and incidentally intended to promote the peaceable relations, as well as the social, intellectual and moral improvement of mankind, they would allow themselves to believe that it was fraught with many evils, especially to members of the Church. The disastrous results of this controversy were easily seen. The Churches became spiritually depressed, so that neither the ministry or membership were in sympathy with revival influences which were abroad in the land, so that many persons were led into other Churches that might—when we consider their social and family ties—have been brought into the Baptist Churches, had they been in good working order, instead of being exhausted by an unnecessary and bootless controversy. They lost, at least for a time, some of their best members, who either withdrew or were excluded, as the result of this controversy, while others, who had intended to affiliate with the Baptists, sought Christian communion in more liberal and peaceable Churches; and if any good resulted from these

heart and Church divisions, it was not visible on the surface of society. The Baptist Churches which had been involved in the controversy about Freemasonry were barely recovering from its effects when the adherents of Alexander Campbell thrust themselves into their midst and made sad havoc in many of the oldest and largest Baptist Churches in the State. But let us turn away from this gloomy picture. After all, it is grateful to the feelings of every pious heart, capable of appreciating the vast amount of good which has been, and may yet be, accomplished through its instrumentality, to know that it is next to the largest denomination in the land, and enjoys, at this time, an encouraging degree of prosperity. In most parts of the Southwest there are Baptist Churches within the reach of all who may wish to affiliate with them. In our next chapter we intend to individualize several of the leading ministers and members of the early Baptist Churches, as illustrative of the piety, steadfastness and zeal of the times.

CHAPTER IV.

John and Jacob Stampley—Ezra Courtney—Moses Hadley—Lawrence Scarborough—Josiah Flowers—Daniel McCall—Lay Members—John Jones—William Snodgrass—Willis McDonald—William Griffing—Phebe Jones—Littleton Mundy.

It is a loss to the Church that so little is now known of the awakening and conversion, accession to the Church and call to the ministry, of the self-denying and laborious men who were conspicuous in the early struggles of the Baptist Church in the Southwest. And the same may be said in regard to the personal experience, godly life and Christian death of many of the laity of those days. Doubtless many incidents connected with their religious history would be admonitory, instructive and encouraging, had they been preserved. But regrets are now unavailing; they are forever lost to the Church, except what few have either been handed down by tradition, can be collected from the imperfect recollections of very aged persons, or from the meagre records of Churches and Associations. It is, however, a great satisfaction to know that they lived consistently, pious and useful, and died in peace and Christian confidence.

We have already stated the fact that the two brothers, John and Jacob Stampley, were prominent among the first Baptists in the Natchez Country. John Stampley, the elder brother, was the brother-in-law of Elder Richard Curtis, having married his sister Phebe, and was a licensed preacher; whether he was ever ordained is not known to the writer. He lived to see the Church fully organized under an Association, was esteemed and trusted by his brethren, and died suddenly

just after preaching his last sermon. Jacob Stampley was long a prominent citizen and layman in the Church before he became a minister. He took an active part in the politics of the times, and the writer believes was at one time a member of the Territorial Legislature. A political disagreement occurred between him and some of the prominent members of Salem Church, which was followed by angry words At an election a party was raised against Stampley, and he was, for a time, suspended from the privileges of church membership; but the difficulty was satisfactorily adjusted, and he returned to the Church again. After this he seemed to take a second growth in religion, entered the ministry when beyond the meridian of life, after which he was zealous, active and useful, until he died in a good old age. He had a voice of great volume, and withal pleasant to the ear, and was a lively, stirring preacher.

Elders Ezra Courtney and Moses Hadley were very conspicuous among the early Baptist Churches in Mississippi. They were often appointed to preach the introductory sermon at the Associations, to preside as Moderator, to write the pastoral circular, and to fill other positions of high trust and great responsibility, all of which shows how highly they were esteemed and how fully they were trusted. Moses Hadley died, it is presumed, in Wilkinson county, in the year 1818, after a laborious and useful life. He is said to have left the world with comfort and in hope of eternal gain. Ezra Courtney attained a great age, was esteemed one of the patriarchs of the Church, and died within the last few years, near Clinton, in Louisiana.

The truth of history requires us to state that the early Mississippi Baptist Churches not only had their troubles with some unfaithful and disorderly laymen, but also with a number of their preachers. Here and there in the printed minutes the Churches are apprised of the deposition of former preachers, or cautioned not to receive, as such, certain imposters and disorderly walkers. The fall of two of their leading ministers, Elders Lawrence Scarborough and Josiah Flowers, was cause of deep sorrow, not only to the Churches, but to all who admire and love ministerial purity and fidelity.

Lawrence Scarborough first appears in the minutes in 1809, and continues as late as 1822. He was plain in person, manners and style of preaching, but was zealous and energetic, and acquired considerable influence as a preacher. His manner of preaching was rather boisterous, and his gesticulation violent. He had acquired "the heavenly tone" in great perfection, and could sing and wail out his hymns, prayers and sermons equal to any man we ever heard. The elocution of the pulpit has so changed since then it is likely that many of our readers do not comprehend what is ment by "the heavenly tone;" and, partial as we were to it in our boyhood, we must acknowledge our inability to describe it adequately. It was made up of assumed intonations of the voice, expressive of great earnestness, and was composed of the cadences of whining, mourning, lamentation and wailing, and was intended to arouse the sympathies of both preacher and auditors. We seldom meet with "the heavenly tone" at this day, except as very imperfectly imitated by some of our colored brethren in their public prayers and exhortations.

Mr. Scarborough was conspicuous as a preacher among the Baptists in Mississippi about fifteen years, and was the pastor of some of their best Churches; but he committed a blunder that overthrew him completely in this country. The minutes containing the adjudication of his case are not extant, so far as the author knows, and he will not undertake to give the details of the case from memory. The substance of the unfortunate and wicked affair was about as follows; Mr. Scarborough as his second wife, married a widow lady, apparently every way suitable for him as to age and circumstances in life. It was not long, however, before they disagreed and parted. Without waiting to justify himself in parting from his wife, or to obtain a legal divorce in case he was justifiable—which we presume few, if any one, believed—he hastily married a young woman, which brought down on him, not only the censure of the Church, but the indignation of the community, in consequence of which he precipitately left the country in disorder and settled in Northern Louisiana, west of the Washita river, where he soon commenced preaching among the Baptists in that region. The Church which claimed jurisdiction over him in Mississippi, not being able to bring him to trial, sent a deputation to Louisiana to inquire into his case, collect any available testimony that might turn up, and report to the Church on their return. The result was, that he was wholly discarded by the Church in Mississippi as an unworthy and fallen minister. In 1826 the writer had a pastoral charge in North Louisiana, and heard that he was still living about the head waters of the Darbonne, near the line between Louisiana and Arkan-

sas, and was still preaching, though in what relation to the Church he did not learn. He has since gone to give an account of his stewardship.

Josiah Flowers was a man of commanding personal appearance, with a mind susceptible of vast improvement. He was bold and self-reliant, and became quite popular and influential as a preacher. His residence was south west of Port Gibson, and his name first appears in the minutes of 1810 as a Delegate from Bayou Pierre Church to the Association. He seemed to study his sermons with care, and had an extraordinary talent for making exact Scripture quotations. His discourses were earnest and searching, and his language, voice and gestures in the pulpit were pleasing. He was for several years the pastor of Fellowship Church, of which the writer's mother was a member, so that he became well acquainted with him, and, up to the beginning of his apostasy, loved no minister as he did him. Often did our young heart melt under his sermons, and often did we secretly vow at his monthly visitations to our Church to lead a new life. But alas! after a brilliant and successful career as a preacher, about the year 1821 or 1822, he fell, where many mighty men, both in Church and State, have fallen. He became a hopeless sot! He was wrong in principle as to the use of alcoholic drinks, and this error led him into a fatal practice. While he took a bold stand against drunkenness, and often denounced it as one of the most degrading and ruinous vices, he looked on rum and whisky—then the common beverages of the country—as among the "good creatures of God, that might be received with thanksgiving" and safely used in moderation.

He made the experiment, but his moderation soon degenerated into excess. His approach to the fatal precipice was so gradual and unnoticed that neither himself or his friends apprehended his danger until he was a ruined man. For a few months before his arraignment fears were entertained that he had become a regular drinker. His breath was constantly scented with whisky, his face became bloated, he became egotistic and loquacious, and finally the forebodings of the Church were confirmed by his coming to one of our monthly meetings so intoxicated that he forgot to introduce the exercises by singing and prayer, but rose up and commenced preaching without these preliminary devotions. Soon after this he was seen on his way home from Rodney so drunk that he had lost his usual self-control, and several persons who saw him—among whom were some of his best friends—were called upon by the members of the Church to testify to the fact. Notwithstanding all this he came to our next monthly meeting and ascended the pulpit as usual. The members held a brief consultation out of the house as to what they should do, and came to the conclusion to inform him at once of the allegations against him, and appointed Daniel Griffing to follow him into the pulpit and inform him of the charge and specifications against him, and that he would soon be arraigned for trial. He rose up and requested the Church to decide by vote whether he should preach that day or not, and after obtaining their consent made the attempt, but he was not his former self at all, and the occasion yet seems to our mind as one of mourning and woe. He was arraigned, tried, found guilty and expelled. He lived several years after his deposition

from the ministry and exclusion from the Church, but we fear not to repent and reform. We have seldom known a brighter sun go down behind a darker cloud. How needful it is for ministers—even old and successful ministers—to "keep their bodies under and bring them into subjection, lest that by any means, when they have preached the gospel to others, they themselves should be cast away."

Let us now turn to a more lovely picture than the last two, as exhibited in the Christian experience and ministerial labors of Elder Daniel McCall, who came as a Baptist missionary to this country about 1820. Himself and wife had been regularly educated and were both highly accomplished, and in their social and Christian character seemed to be without a blemish. As a means of supporting his family, as well as benefiting the community, he established a school of high grade about three miles south of Port Gibson, where, with the assistance of Mrs McCall, he devoted five days in the week to teaching, while Saturdays and Sundays, including other vacations, were industriously devoted to his ministerial work. As the author's only sister was a pupil in his school, and as he was for some time pastor of our Church, and frequently stopped with us, our family became intimately acquainted with him, and his truly Christian spirit and holy conversation made an impression on our hearts not easily effaced. On one occasion we spent a night at his home when he was getting ready for a long and laborious missionary tour through the southern portion of the State. We had the usual family devotions about sunrise in the morning, then breakfast, and just as he was about ready to mount his horse he

called us into prayers again, and, in language earnest and melting, commended his wife and little ones, including all the inmates of the family, to the care of God, invoking, at the same time, a special blessing on his contemplated missionary tour, and then, like a true evangelist, turned his face toward his work.

On one occasion he was detained at our house, by high waters, over the Sabbath, but instead of making it exclusively a day of rest, he seemed to be looking for opportunities to labor for the good of souls. During the fore part of the day he heard the sound of axes and mauls in an adjoining forest, and his spirit was stirred within him at such a desecration of the holy day of rest. A white man, of low grade in morals, had hired some negroes to cut and split rails for him on the Sabbath. Mr. McCall asked us to accompany him to the place, that he might warn these sable sons of Ham of their danger and certain doom, if they persisted in Sabbath breaking. The exhortation was affectionate, but plain and pointed, and he spoke as one having authority from God to "warn the wicked." In order to make his exhortation more effectual, he concluded by telling them if they did not desist, he would be compelled, as a law-abiding citizen, to have them arrested under the statute of the State against Sabbath-breaking. The guilty culprits took up their tools and left forthwith. On the same day he heard that a widowed Presbyterian lady in the vicinity had a grown son in a dangerous decline, and was unprepared for death. He determined on a visit to the afflicted family, and proposed that mother and myself—then a lad—should accompany him; and there was a point in this visit which arrested my atten-

tion at the time, and has had a salutary effect on my mind in similar cases ever since. It was this: when he was introduced to the family as a minister, he politely declined being seated, but went immediately to the bedside of the invalid, and, in tones of affection and brotherly kindness, inquired at once into his spiritual condition. Having received for answer that he had made no special preparation for death, Mr. McCall addressed to him an earnest and affectionate exhortation, containing suitable instruction, warning and encouragement, and then called us all to unite with him in prayer; and it was only after these services were ended that he would consent to be seated and spend a few moments in social conversation with the family. The interests of an immortal spirit, hovering on the verge of its probation, was at stake, and must be faithfully attended to first of all. His example may be safely imitated. If religious services in the chamber of the sick and dying are of the first *importance*, why should they not be the first in *order*?

Mrs. McCall seemed an embodiment of "whatsoever things are lovely and of good report." She died about the 10th of May, 1823, within a few hours of the death of the author's sainted mother, though at a distance from each other. He thought then, as he has often thought since, of the unexpected, though joyful meeting of these two congenial spirits "on the other shore."

Mr. McCall's health also began to decline rapidly, in consequence of his excessive labor and exposure in our Southern climate. On returning from one of his preaching excursions, he stopped at our house with a burning fever, and took to his bed. When the fever had some-

what abated he sat on the bedside and in prophetic language said with much emotion, "I have come to Mississippi to preach the Gospel to the destitute, and lo! I die!" He began to feel that the time of his departure from earth was near. Soon after this he took his two little motherless sons and made an effort to get them to their relations in the North. The next we heard of the good man and faithful minister he had gone to the spirit land. He was one of the most perfect examples of Christian and ministerial purity and fidelity we have ever known.

We will now briefly notice a few of the lay members of the Baptist Church in those early times as specimens of many others that might be noticed, could we do it without transcending the limits of our plan. It is painfully true, as has always been the case, that there was some chaff among the primitive Baptists of Mississippi and the Southwest; but there was among them a large proportion of the best of wheat. John Jones has heretofore been mentioned as an elder half-brother of Rev. Richard Curtis, and as one of the emigrant family that formed the nucleus of the original Baptist Church in the Natchez Country. He had encountered many hardships and dangers in the service of his country during the war of the Colonial Revolution, and had proven himself to be a good soldier on many battle-fields. He had also endured much "hardness as a soldier of Jesus Christ." His religion was "that of the heart, in the spirit and not in the letter," and hence he did not permit it to be controlled by the fluctuations of outward circumstances. If it was his duty as well as his privilege to be a Christian at any time, he considered

it equally so to be a Christian at all times, and hence he maintained his Christian profession and character in the face of all opposition through a long and eventful life. He was a man of well-balanced judgment and sober prudence, so that while he was equally serviceable to the Church with others he was not subjected to the personal persecution which some of his fellow-Christians had to endure. He always prayed in his family evening and morning, and when the country was destitute of preaching, or there was no preaching in reach of his family, he would have an extra family service on the Sabbath. He displayed a degree of Christian ingenuity and fidelity in one instance well worthy the notice and imitation of all Christians similarly situated. When the majority of his children were about grown he had a most lovely and attractive family of young people, embracing several amiable daughters. This made his house a center of attraction for the young people of the vicinity on holy days and Sundays, and he was grieved to see them leading his children into such "jesting and foolish talking," and other frivolities as he deemed inconsistent, not only with the claims of the holy Sabbath, but with their personal piety. In order to arrest and mitigate the evil as much as possible, without giving unnecessary offense, he adopted a rule requiring all who came to spend the Sabbath day at his house to assemble with his family for a good, long religious service, consisting of reading an appropriate sermon or select portions of Scripture, singing one or more of Watts' hymns, line at a time, and a prayer of considerable length offered up in the "heavenly tone." The consequence was that such as had no sympathy with such

devotional exercises made themselves scarce about his premises on the Sabbath, and those who had were benefitted by coming. Mr. Jones loved the house of God, especially his beloved old Salem Church, to the day of his death, and he persisted in attending the monthly meetings to extreme old age. He lived to see his country again involved in a war with England, and his youngest son, Zachariah Brown, with many other near relations, taking part in the bloody strife; but they very generally came out unharmed, and he survived to see the country once more in the enjoyment of peace and civil and religious prosperity. The author knew him well in the days of his minority as one of the most meek, exemplary and deeply pious men he has ever known. He died on his little farm near Uniontown, in Jefferson county, upon which some of his descendants yet live, on the 10th of September, 1821, in the seventy-seventh year of his age. Anna Brown, the wife of his youth, and the mother of his ten children, had preceded him to the spirit land near twenty years; but he remained where she died, contented to finish his journey alone until he was permitted to sleep in the dust by her side, and to await with her "the resurrection of the just."

William Snodgrass was a conspicuous layman among the Baptists in western Mississippi early in the present century. He was a merchant in Greenville, then the county seat of Jefferson county, in 1802 or 1803, as we have often heard it said that he was faithful in his Christian attentions to May and Sutton, the accomplices of the celebrated robber, Mason, both of whom were imprisoned and hung at Greenville as highway robbers

So far as the author knows, they almost universally prayed in their families evening and morning, and were strict observers of Christian decorum in all the details of life. Elder Curtis died October 28, 1811, at the house of a friend on Beaver Creek, in Amite county, where he had gone to seek medical relief from a cancer that occasioned his death. Inquiry has been made for his grave, of late years, in view of placing a suitable monument on it, but it has not been found.

"His ashes lie, no marble tells us where
With his name no bard embalms or sanctifies his song."

But his record is on high! He was a plain, honest, unsophisticated man, a sincere and spiritual Christian, and an uncompromising and zealous preacher of the Gospel. If he was very pointed and plain spoken at times in the pulpit, his manner suited the rough work he had to do.

His wife, "Aunt Pattie," as she was familiarly called by the connection, survived as a hale old lady until about 1818 or '19. She died in Jefferson county and is buried on the plantation of Mrs. Samuel Bolls, two or three miles east of Fayette.

Within the year immediately preceding the evacuation of the Natchez District by the Spanish Government, and pending the negotiations between the representatives of the United States and those of the Court of Madrid, there was a great deal of ill feeling between the adherents of the two Governments, and also between the Protestants and Catholics. Believing the day of their freedom from Papal rule to be near at hand, the Baptists began to rally their forces and to demand the re-establishment of their public worship. This state of

affairs brought to light several prominent members and licensed preachers of the Baptist Church not heretofore known in its history. Among them we find the names of William and Bailey Chaney, from South Carolina. William Chaney had been ordained a Deacon in the Church, and several persons desiring baptism before the return of Elder Curtis, he was appointed by the members to administer the ordinance, from which we infer that he was a man of gifts as well as grace. Bailey Chaney was a licensed preacher, and probably preached the first sermon in Natchez after the Spanish Government was superceded by that of the United States. Soon after the Spaniards left, the Americans erected a large bush arbor and supplied it with a temporary pulpit and seats, and invited Mr. Chaney to preach them a sermon under the "Stars and Stripes," which he did to an immense congregation. While we can not accord to our Baptist brethren the honor of establishing the first Protestant Church in the Natchez Country—that having been done, as we have seen in a previous chapter, by the Congregationalists—we cheerfully accord to them the honor of establishing the second, and of preaching the first sermon here, under the United States Government. Another prominent Baptist of that day was a man by the name of Harigail, from Georgia, who, it is presumed, was a licensed preacher. He seems, from circumstances mentioned in connection with his history, to have been a warm-hearted, impulsive, bold man, and somewhat imprudent in the manifestations of his zeal. On one occasion, after denouncing the superstition and despotism of the Papal hierarchy, and exhorting his brethren to constancy in the face of all opposition from that

source, he quoted the following sentence from the epistle to the Hebrews: "Ye have not resisted unto blood striving against sin." This language was repeated to the priesthood at Natchez, and by them construed into insurrectionary designs against the Government; and an attempt was made to arrest and imprison Harigail, but he escaped, and was harbored for some time by a man, not a professor of religion, by the name of Morris Custard. Mr. Custard was accused of complicity in the escape of Harigail, and was imprisoned several months. There was another Baptist preacher by the name of John Hannah, who was conspicuous for his opposition to Catholicism about the winding up of the Provincial Government. But little is now known of him, except that he attacked Catholicism in a public discourse in Natchez, and afterward got into a heated controversy with some Irish Catholics, who gave him a beating. Mr. Hannah applied to the Governor for redress, but Gayoso believing he had brought these things on himself, by what he considered his imprudent zeal against the Catholics, ordered his confinement in the calaboose. This act of the Governor was construed, not only into an insult to Protestantism, but as an outrage upon the privileges of an American citizen, and so great was the excitement and so ominous the outbursts of indignation the day after, that Gayoso, with other Spanish officers and several Spanish families, were glad of an opportunity to take refuge in the fort until the threatening storm passed away. The preacher was released, and lived a number of years to enjoy his well-earned religious liberties. Mrs Elizabeth Osteen, wife of Thomas S. Osteen, who was for nearly forty years one of the most

pious, talented and useful members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Jefferson county, Mississippi, was a daughter of his; and though he died when she was young, she retained a vivid recollection of his uniform piety and prayerfulness, and especially the interest he took in her religious instruction and personal salvation.

At the conclusion of the Provincial Government, the Baptists being already on the ground, and in a state of efficient organization, as well as zealous and active, soon had the privilege of seeing their hitherto persecuted and down-trodden Church, which had been planted and nurtured "in troublous times," spreading abroad in the land. Soon after the establishment of the Territorial Government in Mississippi, they received many valuable accessions by emigration from South Carolina, Georgia and Tennessee. About the year 1800, a second Baptist Church, called New Hope, was organized on Second Creek, in Adams county, and about the same time another near Woodville, called Bethel. In 1805 New Providence and Ebenezer Churches were established in Amite county. In September, 1806, these five Churches appointed Delegates to meet at Salem for the purpose of organizing an Association. From some cause the organization of the Association seems not to have been perfected until the next annual meeting of Delegates, which took place at Bethel, near Woodville, September 26, 1807. The minutes of the Association state that the "Association convened at Bethel Church, Bayou Sara, Mississippi Territory," from which we infer that Bethel Church was southwest of Woodville, on the waters of a small stream of that name, which afterward gave name to the town of Bayou Sara, at its mouth on the

Mississippi river. This Association was called "The Mississippi Baptist Association," and it adopted the Calvinistic creed in all its details, defined its powers, and agreed on sundry rules of order and decorum. From this time the denomination had encouraging success in every direction. New Churches were annually added to the Association, so that in 1813 eighteen Churches were represented; in 1815 the number had increased to twenty-four; in 1817, to thirty-six, and in 1818 forty Churches sent their Delegates to the Annual Association. The original Association having by this time become unwieldy, on account of its size and the extent of territory occupied by its Churches, took the preliminary steps, in 1819, to organize two other Associations, both of which met for the first time in 1820. The Union Association was duly constituted in September of this year, and the Pearl River in November. Some Baptists existed in Opelousas, Louisiana, as early as 1810, for in October of that year a petition was presented to the Mississippi Association from "certain brethren, and from a number of citizens in Opelousas, praying that Brother J. Willis be set apart, by ordination, to the work of the ministry;" whereupon Elders David Cooper and Lawrence Scarborough were appointed to visit the brethren in Opelousas and ordain Mr. Willis, if they, upon examination, should think it expedient. From some cause, now unknown, he was not ordained at that time, but he visited the Association next year, in session at New Hope, in Adams county, Miss., and was cordially invited to a seat in the body; and Elders Thomas Mercer and David Cooper were appointed to visit the members in Opelousas. In 1812

the Association appointed Elders Moses Hadley and Lawrence Scarborough to ordain Mr. Willis in Opelousas, and constitute a Church in the vicinity where he lived. Several other Churches west of the Mississippi river had been organized previous to 1818, but, except the one in Opelousas, they had not geographical names, and their location can not now be determined. On account of the great difficulties they had to encounter in attending the Association east of the river, they were dismissed from its jurisdiction and permitted to organize one in Western Louisiana, which was done in November, 1818, by the assistance of Elders Cooper, Courtney and J. Smith, from the Mississippi Association. From this time there was a regular exchange of associational messengers and letters between the two bodies. These few recorded facts, meagre as they are, show conclusively that the Louisiana Association was the legitimate daughter of the Mississippi Association.

The Baptists have been a zealous and progressive branch of the general Church in the Southwest from their first organization, so that now they have Churches and associations here and there, all over Mississippi and Louisiana. We have looked into the history of their progress and think we have learned what agencies, under the Divine blessing, have mainly contributed to their success. They had, at an early day, a fair supply of preachers, so far at least as numbers were concerned. It is true that many of them did nothing more than earnestly harangue the people on portions of Gospel truth and Christian experience; but their disjointed discourses, full of pathos and sympathy, and delivered in that peculiar cadence called, "the heavenly tone,"

suited the majority, and were the means of doing much good. A fair proportion, however, of the early Baptist preachers, were fully up to mediocrity, and some of them were men of superior education and commanding talents in the pulpit. Elder Thomas Mercer, whose name is often found in the minutes from 1808 to the time of his death, was a man who preached "in the demonstration of the spirit and of power." He was the revivalist of his day, the Boanerges of the Baptist Church in this country. There was generally a shaking among the "dry bones" where he preached. In those days hymn-books were very scarce and hard to obtain. To supply this material deficiency, Mr. Mercer made a selection of hymns suitable for private, family and public worship, and published them in pamphlet form and distributed them generally among the people, who sang them with much earnestness and good effect. Most of his hymns and choruses were appropriate for the use of all Christian people; but to some of them Pedo-Baptists would object, especially the one commencing,

"In Jordan's tide the Baptist stands,
Immersing the repenting Jews."

Doctor David Cooper came early in the present century as a missionary of the Baptist Church. His name first appears in the printed minutes of 1808. He was a man liberally educated, polished in his manners, and attractive and useful as an able minister of the New Testament. For more than thirty years he was a file-leader in building up and extending the Baptist Churches in Southwestern Mississippi. He was a warm advocate for a higher grade of ministerial educa-

tion than generally existed among his co-laborers. As early as 1817, as chairman of a committee appointed for that purpose, he presented a paper to the Association on the importance of ministerial improvement, that would read well as late as the present day. Another thing which contributed greatly to the edification and extension of the Baptist Church in those early days, when Bibles and other religious books were very scarce, was their pastoral circulars, which were annually printed with their Associational minutes, and distributed generally among the members and patrons of the Church. It is true there are some things in those official circulars to the Churches which Arminians and Pedo-Baptists would not subscribe to as Bible truth; but there is a great deal of solid truth on the subject of doctrinal, experimental and practical godliness set forth in those pastoral letters, well-supported by appropriate quotations from the Holy Scriptures, and doubtless they were a blessing to many. David Cooper, Thomas Mercer, Moses Hadley and David Snodgrass were generally depended on to write the annual pastoral letters to the Churches, until, at a later period, Elders James A. Ranneson, Daniel McCall and other men of superior piety and learning became prominent among the Baptists in Mississippi. Another agency which contributed largely to the extension of the Baptist Church in early times was their itinerant preaching. The Association had no regular plan of itinerant preaching, such as we find in the Methodist Episcopal Churches, but most of the ministers kept up a sort of irregular itinerancy, that proved a great blessing to destitute settlements, and was the means of originating new Churches in various

places. In 1814 the Association formally resolved, "that it be recommended to, and enjoined on, the preachers of our order, that they use their utmost diligence in the practice of itinerant preaching." Many of those primitive Baptist preachers in the Southwest were a stirring class of men. They often made extra sacrifices and exertions, and turned out of the beaten track in order to preach the Gospel to the destitute; and verily they had their reward in the rich harvest of souls they were instrumental in gathering into the Churches.

These original Baptist Churches, however, did not enjoy uninterrupted peace and prosperity. In addition to opposition from without, they were often distracted by internal controversies. We do not suppose they were more inclined to heart and church divisions than other Christian people, but they seemed not to have the means of settling them so promptly and so permanently. The history of old Salem, the first Church, presents a sad and melancholy picture to the pious heart. After it had enjoyed about fifteen years of prosperity, and, about 1812–13, had been favored with the most extensive revival known in the country up to that date, differences of opinion grew up between some of the leading members, which led to ill temper and angry words, and finally were brought into the monthly conferences of the Church, where they were long debated, until parties were formed, and the membership was agitated from center to circumference. From that unnatural and unchristian feud we date the decline and ultimate downfall of the first Baptist Church in Mississippi. The faithful few struggled hard and long to maintain their

organization, but having no more revivals to recruit their numbers, and suffering diminution constantly from deaths and removals, they at last yielded to their hapless fate, and ceased the bootless strife. About twenty-five or thirty years ago the woodwork of the church edifice was accidentally destroyed by fire, since which time the brick walls have been gradually taken away for neighborhood purposes, until now nothing remains to designate the spot to the passer-by but the grave-yard, where reposes the dust of some of the best of our race. The descendants of several of the leading Baptist families still live in the vicinity of the old Church, but they are not Baptists, and too many of them are not Christians at all. In contrasting its present utter desolation with its former glory, an indescribable feeling of sadness comes over the soul. But the fruits of old Salem are not all lost. In her chivalrous days she sent out a number of vigorous colonies which yet live and prosper. But Salem was not the only Church that was distracted and torn asunder by these unholy feuds; for many others shared a similar fate. It would seem that some men can not consent to get along quietly with their associates in church-fellowship. They must have some debatable question before the Church in the form of a "query," or a "resolution," often wholly irrelevant, and something over which the Church has no scriptural jurisdiction, and about which she ought not to attempt any legislation whatever. Some of the most humiliating and disastrous divisions ever made in the Churches of our Lord Jesus Christ have grown out of exciting and long-continued controversies about non-essentials, or attempts made to extend their ecclesiastical jurisdiction

over subjects wholly beyond their legitimate control. We have a painful and admonitory instance of this in a controversy which prevailed in the second and third decades of the present century in many of the Baptist Churches in Mississippi, on the subject of Free Masonry. Instead of simply exercising discipline over their members in regard to their Christian faith, Church obligations and religious duties, an attempt was made, by Church legislation, to compel all the members who belonged to the Masonic Lodges to dissolve their connection with the Fraternity, and to prohibit others from joining it. Instead of looking on Freemasonry as a charitable institution, organized on Bible principles, and incidentally intended to promote the peaceable relations, as well as the social, intellectual and moral improvement of mankind, they would allow themselves to believe that it was fraught with many evils, especially to members of the Church. The disastrous results of this controversy were easily seen. The Churches became spiritually depressed, so that neither the ministry or membership were in sympathy with revival influences which were abroad in the land, so that many persons were led into other Churches that might—when we consider their social and family ties—have been brought into the Baptist Churches, had they been in good working order, instead of being exhausted by an unnecessary and bootless controversy. They lost, at least for a time, some of their best members, who either withdrew or were excluded, as the result of this controversy, while others, who had intended to affiliate with the Baptists, sought Christian communion in more liberal and peaceable Churches; and if any good resulted from these

heart and Church divisions, it was not visible on the surface of society. The Baptist Churches which had been involved in the controversy about Freemasonry were barely recovering from its effects when the adherents of Alexander Campbell thrust themselves into their midst and made sad havoc in many of the oldest and largest Baptist Churches in the State. But let us turn away from this gloomy picture. After all, it is grateful to the feelings of every pious heart, capable of appreciating the vast amount of good which has been, and may yet be, accomplished through its instrumentality, to know that it is next to the largest denomination in the land, and enjoys, at this time, an encouraging degree of prosperity. In most parts of the Southwest there are Baptist Churches within the reach of all who may wish to affiliate with them. In our next chapter we intend to individualize several of the leading ministers and members of the early Baptist Churches, as illustrative of the piety, steadfastness and zeal of the times.

CHAPTER IV.

John and Jacob Stampley—Ezra Courtney—Moses Hadley—Lawrence Scarborough—Josiah Flowers—Daniel McCall—Lay Members—John Jones—William Snodgrass—Willis McDonald—William Griffing—Phebe Jones—Littleton Mundy.

It is a loss to the Church that so little is now known of the awakening and conversion, accession to the Church and call to the ministry, of the self-denying and laborious men who were conspicuous in the early struggles of the Baptist Church in the Southwest. And the same may be said in regard to the personal experience, godly life and Christian death of many of the laity of those days. Doubtless many incidents connected with their religious history would be admonitory, instructive and encouraging, had they been preserved. But regrets are now unavailing; they are forever lost to the Church, except what few have either been handed down by tradition, can be collected from the imperfect recollections of very aged persons, or from the meagre records of Churches and Associations. It is, however, a great satisfaction to know that they lived consistently, pious and useful, and died in peace and Christian confidence.

We have already stated the fact that the two brothers, John and Jacob Stampley, were prominent among the first Baptists in the Natchez Country. John Stampley, the elder brother, was the brother-in-law of Elder Richard Curtis, having married his sister Phebe, and was a licensed preacher; whether he was ever ordained is not known to the writer. He lived to see the Church fully organized under an Association, was esteemed and trusted by his brethren, and died suddenly

just after preaching his last sermon. Jacob Stampley was long a prominent citizen and layman in the Church before he became a minister. He took an active part in the politics of the times, and the writer believes was at one time a member of the Territorial Legislature. A political disagreement occurred between him and some of the prominent members of Salem Church, which was followed by angry words At an election a party was raised against Stampley, and he was, for a time, suspended from the privileges of church membership; but the difficulty was satisfactorily adjusted, and he returned to the Church again. After this he seemed to take a second growth in religion, entered the ministry when beyond the meridian of life, after which he was zealous, active and useful, until he died in a good old age. He had a voice of great volume, and withal pleasant to the ear, and was a lively, stirring preacher.

Elders Ezra Courtney and Moses Hadley were very conspicuous among the early Baptist Churches in Mississippi. They were often appointed to preach the introductory sermon at the Associations, to preside as Moderator, to write the pastoral circular, and to fill other positions of high trust and great responsibility, all of which shows how highly they were esteemed and how fully they were trusted. Moses Hadley died, it is presumed, in Wilkinson county, in the year 1818, after a laborious and useful life. He is said to have left the world with comfort and in hope of eternal gain. Ezra Courtney attained a great age, was esteemed one of the patriarchs of the Church, and died within the last few years, near Clinton, in Louisiana.

The truth of history requires us to state that the early Mississippi Baptist Churches not only had their troubles with some unfaithful and disorderly laymen, but also with a number of their preachers. Here and there in the printed minutes the Churches are apprised of the deposition of former preachers, or cautioned not to receive, as such, certain imposters and disorderly walkers. The fall of two of their leading ministers, Elders Lawrence Scarborough and Josiah Flowers, was cause of deep sorrow, not only to the Churches, but to all who admire and love ministerial purity and fidelity.

Lawrence Scarborough first appears in the minutes in 1809, and continues as late as 1822. He was plain in person, manners and style of preaching, but was zealous and energetic, and acquired considerable influence as a preacher. His manner of preaching was rather boisterous, and his gesticulation violent. He had acquired "the heavenly tone" in great perfection, and could sing and wail out his hymns, prayers and sermons equal to any man we ever heard. The elocution of the pulpit has so changed since then it is likely that many of our readers do not comprehend what is ment by "the heavenly tone;" and, partial as we were to it in our boyhood, we must acknowledge our inability to describe it adequately. It was made up of assumed intonations of the voice, expressive of great earnestness, and was composed of the cadences of whining, mourning, lamentation and wailing, and was intended to arouse the sympathies of both preacher and auditors. We seldom meet with "the heavenly tone" at this day, except as very imperfectly imitated by some of our colored brethren in their public prayers and exhortations.

Mr. Scarborough was conspicuous as a preacher among the Baptists in Mississippi about fifteen years, and was the pastor of some of their best Churches; but he committed a blunder that overthrew him completely in this country. The minutes containing the adjudication of his case are not extant, so far as the author knows, and he will not undertake to give the details of the case from memory. The substance of the unfortunate and wicked affair was about as follows: Mr. Scarborough as his second wife, married a widow lady, apparently every way suitable for him as to age and circumstances in life. It was not long, however, before they disagreed and parted. Without waiting to justify himself in parting from his wife, or to obtain a legal divorce in case he was justifiable—which we presume few, if any one, believed—he hastily married a young woman, which brought down on him, not only the censure of the Church, but the indignation of the community, in consequence of which he precipitately left the country in disorder and settled in Northern Louisiana, west of the Washita river, where he soon commenced preaching among the Baptists in that region. The Church which claimed jurisdiction over him in Mississippi, not being able to bring him to trial, sent a deputation to Louisiana to inquire into his case, collect any available testimony that might turn up, and report to the Church on their return. The result was, that he was wholly discarded by the Church in Mississippi as an unworthy and fallen minister. In 1826 the writer had a pastoral charge in North Louisiana, and heard that he was still living about the head waters of the Darbonne, near the line between Louisiana and Arkan-

sas, and was still preaching, though in what relation to the Church he did not learn. He has since gone to give an account of his stewardship.

Josiah Flowers was a man of commanding personal appearance, with a mind susceptible of vast improvement. He was bold and self-reliant, and became quite popular and influential as a preacher. His residence was south west of Port Gibson, and his name first appears in the minutes of 1810 as a Delegate from Bayou Pierre Church to the Association. He seemed to study his sermons with care, and had an extraordinary talent for making exact Scripture quotations. His discourses were earnest and searching, and his language, voice and gestures in the pulpit were pleasing. He was for several years the pastor of Fellowship Church, of which the writer's mother was a member, so that he became well acquainted with him, and, up to the beginning of his apostasy, loved no minister as he did him. Often did our young heart melt under his sermons, and often did we secretly vow at his monthly visitations to our Church to lead a new life. But alas! after a brilliant and successful career as a preacher, about the year 1821 or 1822, he fell, where many mighty men, both in Church and State, have fallen. He became a hopeless sot! He was wrong in principle as to the use of alcoholic drinks, and this error led him into a fatal practice. While he took a bold stand against drunkenness, and often denounced it as one of the most degrading and ruinous vices, he looked on rum and whisky—then the common beverages of the country—as among the "good creatures of God, that might be received with thanksgiving" and safely used in moderation.

He made the experiment, but his moderation soon degenerated into excess. His approach to the fatal precipice was so gradual and unnoticed that neither himself or his friends apprehended his danger until he was a ruined man. For a few months before his arraignment fears were entertained that he had become a regular drinker. His breath was constantly scented with whisky, his face became bloated, he became egotistic and loquacious, and finally the forebodings of the Church were confirmed by his coming to one of our monthly meetings so intoxicated that he forgot to introduce the exercises by singing and prayer, but rose up and commenced preaching without these preliminary devotions. Soon after this he was seen on his way home from Rodney so drunk that he had lost his usual self-control, and several persons who saw him—among whom were some of his best friends—were called upon by the members of the Church to testify to the fact. Notwithstanding all this he came to our next monthly meeting and ascended the pulpit as usual. The members held a brief consultation out of the house as to what they should do, and came to the conclusion to inform him at once of the allegations against him, and appointed Daniel Griffing to follow him into the pulpit and inform him of the charge and specifications against him, and that he would soon be arraigned for trial. He rose up and requested the Church to decide by vote whether he should preach that day or not, and after obtaining their consent made the attempt, but he was not his former self at all, and the occasion yet seems to our mind as one of mourning and woe. He was arraigned, tried, found guilty and expelled. He lived several years after his deposition

from the ministry and exclusion from the Church, but we fear not to repent and reform. We have seldom known a brighter sun go down behind a darker cloud. How needful it is for ministers—even old and successful ministers—to "keep their bodies under and bring them into subjection, lest that by any means, when they have preached the gospel to others, they themselves should be cast away."

Let us now turn to a more lovely picture than the last two, as exhibited in the Christian experience and ministerial labors of Elder Daniel McCall, who came as a Baptist missionary to this country about 1820. Himself and wife had been regularly educated and were both highly accomplished, and in their social and Christian character seemed to be without a blemish. As a means of supporting his family, as well as benefiting the community, he established a school of high grade about three miles south of Port Gibson, where, with the assistance of Mrs McCall, he devoted five days in the week to teaching, while Saturdays and Sundays, including other vacations, were industriously devoted to his ministerial work. As the author's only sister was a pupil in his school, and as he was for some time pastor of our Church, and frequently stopped with us, our family became intimately acquainted with him, and his truly Christian spirit and holy conversation made an impression on our hearts not easily effaced. On one occasion we spent a night at his home when he was getting ready for a long and laborious missionary tour through the southern portion of the State. We had the usual family devotions about sunrise in the morning, then breakfast, and just as he was about ready to mount his horse he

called us into prayers again, and, in language earnest and melting, commended his wife and little ones, including all the inmates of the family, to the care of God, invoking, at the same time, a special blessing on his contemplated missionary tour, and then, like a true evangelist, turned his face toward his work.

On one occasion he was detained at our house, by high waters, over the Sabbath, but instead of making it exclusively a day of rest, he seemed to be looking for opportunities to labor for the good of souls. During the fore part of the day he heard the sound of axes and mauls in an adjoining forest, and his spirit was stirred within him at such a desecration of the holy day of rest. A white man, of low grade in morals, had hired some negroes to cut and split rails for him on the Sabbath. Mr. McCall asked us to accompany him to the place, that he might warn these sable sons of Ham of their danger and certain doom, if they persisted in Sabbath breaking. The exhortation was affectionate, but plain and pointed, and he spoke as one having authority from God to "warn the wicked." In order to make his exhortation more effectual, he concluded by telling them if they did not desist, he would be compelled, as a law-abiding citizen, to have them arrested under the statute of the State against Sabbath-breaking. The guilty culprits took up their tools and left forthwith. On the same day he heard that a widowed Presbyterian lady in the vicinity had a grown son in a dangerous decline, and was unprepared for death. He determined on a visit to the afflicted family, and proposed that mother and myself—then a lad—should accompany him; and there was a point in this visit which arrested my atten-

tion at the time, and has had a salutary effect on my mind in similar cases ever since. It was this: when he was introduced to the family as a minister, he politely declined being seated, but went immediately to the bedside of the invalid, and, in tones of affection and brotherly kindness, inquired at once into his spiritual condition. Having received for answer that he had made no special preparation for death, Mr. McCall addressed to him an earnest and affectionate exhortation, containing suitable instruction, warning and encouragement, and then called us all to unite with him in prayer; and it was only after these services were ended that he would consent to be seated and spend a few moments in social conversation with the family. The interests of an immortal spirit, hovering on the verge of its probation, was at stake, and must be faithfully attended to first of all. His example may be safely imitated. If religious services in the chamber of the sick and dying are of the first *importance*, why should they not be the first in *order*?

Mrs. McCall seemed an embodiment of "whatsoever things are lovely and of good report." She died about the 10th of May, 1823, within a few hours of the death of the author's sainted mother, though at a distance from each other. He thought then, as he has often thought since, of the unexpected, though joyful meeting of these two congenial spirits "on the other shore."

Mr. McCall's health also began to decline rapidly, in consequence of his excessive labor and exposure in our Southern climate. On returning from one of his preaching excursions, he stopped at our house with a burning fever, and took to his bed. When the fever had some-

what abated he sat on the bedside and in prophetic language said with much emotion, "I have come to Mississippi to preach the Gospel to the destitute, and lo! I die!" He began to feel that the time of his departure from earth was near. Soon after this he took his two little motherless sons and made an effort to get them to their relations in the North. The next we heard of the good man and faithful minister he had gone to the spirit land. He was one of the most perfect examples of Christian and ministerial purity and fidelity we have ever known.

We will now briefly notice a few of the lay members of the Baptist Church in those early times as specimens of many others that might be noticed, could we do it without transcending the limits of our plan. It is painfully true, as has always been the case, that there was some chaff among the primitive Baptists of Mississippi and the Southwest; but there was among them a large proportion of the best of wheat. John Jones has heretofore been mentioned as an elder half-brother of Rev. Richard Curtis, and as one of the emigrant family that formed the nucleus of the original Baptist Church in the Natchez Country. He had encountered many hardships and dangers in the service of his country during the war of the Colonial Revolution, and had proven himself to be a good soldier on many battle-fields. He had also endured much "hardness as a soldier of Jesus Christ." His religion was "that of the heart, in the spirit and not in the letter," and hence he did not permit it to be controlled by the fluctuations of outward circumstances. If it was his duty as well as his privilege to be a Christian at any time, he considered

it equally so to be a Christian at all times, and hence he maintained his Christian profession and character in the face of all opposition through a long and eventful life. He was a man of well-balanced judgment and sober prudence, so that while he was equally serviceable to the Church with others he was not subjected to the personal persecution which some of his fellow-Christians had to endure. He always prayed in his family evening and morning, and when the country was destitute of preaching, or there was no preaching in reach of his family, he would have an extra family service on the Sabbath. He displayed a degree of Christian ingenuity and fidelity in one instance well worthy the notice and imitation of all Christians similarly situated. When the majority of his children were about grown he had a most lovely and attractive family of young people, embracing several amiable daughters. This made his house a center of attraction for the young people of the vicinity on holy days and Sundays, and he was grieved to see them leading his children into such "jesting and foolish talking," and other frivolities as he deemed inconsistent, not only with the claims of the holy Sabbath, but with their personal piety. In order to arrest and mitigate the evil as much as possible, without giving unnecessary offense, he adopted a rule requiring all who came to spend the Sabbath day at his house to assemble with his family for a good, long religious service, consisting of reading an appropriate sermon or select portions of Scripture, singing one or more of Watts' hymns, line at a time, and a prayer of considerable length offered up in the "heavenly tone." The consequence was that such as had no sympathy with such

devotional exercises made themselves scarce about his premises on the Sabbath, and those who had were benefitted by coming. Mr. Jones loved the house of God, especially his beloved old Salem Church, to the day of his death, and he persisted in attending the monthly meetings to extreme old age. He lived to see his country again involved in a war with England, and his youngest son, Zachariah Brown, with many other near relations, taking part in the bloody strife; but they very generally came out unharmed, and he survived to see the country once more in the enjoyment of peace and civil and religious prosperity. The author knew him well in the days of his minority as one of the most meek, exemplary and deeply pious men he has ever known. He died on his little farm near Uniontown, in Jefferson county, upon which some of his descendants yet live, on the 10th of September, 1821, in the seventy-seventh year of his age. Anna Brown, the wife of his youth, and the mother of his ten children, had preceded him to the spirit land near twenty years; but he remained where she died, contented to finish his journey alone until he was permitted to sleep in the dust by her side, and to await with her "the resurrection of the just."

William Snodgrass was a conspicuous layman among the Baptists in western Mississippi early in the present century. He was a merchant in Greenville, then the county seat of Jefferson county, in 1802 or 1803, as we have often heard it said that he was faithful in his Christian attentions to May and Sutton, the accomplices of the celebrated robber, Mason, both of whom were imprisoned and hung at Greenville as highway robbers

and murderers about that time. Mr. Snodgrass furnished them with copies of the New Testament to read during their incarceration, and one of them professed hope in Christ before his execution. After this Mr. Snodgrass settled in Natchez and established, perhaps, the first book-store ever established in Mississippi, which contributed largely to the dissemination of religious literature in the country, especially of the Calvinistic caste. He was a polished gentleman as well as an earnest Christian, and commanded respect as such wherever he went. Being a man of superior business talents, he was often elected clerk of the Association, appointed on important committees and to superintend the printing and distribution of the annual minutes. He was a sensible talker on the subject of experimental religion, and gifted in prayer, though quiet and unobtrusive in his Christian character. His spiritual consolations were not outwardly emotional but full of inward peace, and he died saying, "O, the joy! O, the joy!"

Willis McDonald was quite a character among the Baptists of this country for at least forty years of the first half of the present century. He resided in the northern part of Jefferson county, and as early as 1808 represented the Bayou Pierre Church in the Association. He was a great "go to meeting body," and generally attended all in his reach. Often, when there was no service in his own Church, he would dash off early on Saturday morning to some distant Church, where he would remain until the close of the Sabbath exercises and then return as rapidly home. He took an active part in all Church matters within his sphere,

and, as opportunity offered, opened his private dwelling to the accredited ministers of every denomination to hold forth the word of life to his neighbors. One of the first Methodist sermons the writer ever heard was under his roof, about fifty years ago. He has forgotten the name of the preacher, but can never forget a portion of his sermon. He dwelt on the title of Christ as our Redeemer so pathetically as to fix it indelibly upon his mind.

Mr. McDonald, by his own request, was dismissed from Bayou Pierre church, that he might unite with others in forming Fellowship church, in communion with which he died. He was an unlettered man, which prevented his gaining information from books; but by listening to others, in connection with his own practical observations and long experience, he became one of the dispensers of practical wisdom in his neighborhood. He did not allow his inability to read to interfere with the evening and morning family devotions, which were so common among the Baptists of those days. At the appointed time he would assemble his household, and, after sitting a moment in silence, as though he was composing his mind for a near approach to God, would deliberately kneel and offer his supplications, touching on all the ordinary topics of general prayer. An incident occurred which, though painful to his feelings, showed the strength of his religious principles and fidelity. In his younger days he had been familiar with the scenes of the Revolution, and was ever after fond of celebrating our national anniversary. On one of those occasions, while yet in the prime of manhood, he indulged a little too freely in the usual beverage. As

soon as he felt the fumes of the liquor affecting his brain he mounted his horse, took fast hold of the pommel of his saddle and rode home at a rapid rate. He was deeply mortified and humbled at the occurrence, and in a few days rode round among the members of his church to confess his fault and ask their forgiveness. Among others, he called on the author's mother and, with meekness and humility, which evinced true penitence, said, "Sister Jones, I was not to say really drunk, but my head swam amazingly!" The church received his voluntary confession in a Christian spirit, and we never heard any further complaint against him on that score. He attained to more than four-score years, and had as many marks of the true Christian inscribed in his character as any man within our knowledge. His death was occasioned by a fall from his horse. Father McDonald left a numerous posterity in the country, many of whom are worthy members of the Baptist and Methodist Episcopal Churches. He was the maternal grandfather of Rev. William H. Watkins, D. D., of the Mississippi Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

William Griffing was a lineal descendant of Rev. Samuel Swayze, the venerable founder of the first Protestant Church in the Natchez country. His religious training was about as good as could be expected under the restrictions of the Papal hierarchy. One of the first Methodist Episcopal Churches formed in the country was formed in his father's house, near Selsertown, in Adams county, and principally of his father's family, of which he was one. His reputation for piety soon became well established, and he was esteemed a promising mem-

ber of this Church, which had but lately made its appearance in this country. He, however, married the daughter of John Jones, which brought him into close relationship with the leading Baptist families of Salem Church, and it was very natural for him to be influenced, more or less, by people of such acknowledged piety. He first became dissatisfied with his infant baptism, and accordingly applied to the Baptist Church for re-baptism by immersion.

After this he gradually imbibed the Calvinistic creed of his Church until, within a few years, he might have been numbered among the most rigid Calvinistic Baptists; and, being somewhat inclined to religious controversy, he did not always get along on the most agreeable terms with his Arminian and Pedo-Baptist relations. But such was his evident sincerity and uniform piety that he challenged the confidence and commanded the respect of all who knew him. He was faithful in his attendance upon all the meetings of his own Church, and upon those of other Churches when there was none in his own. His pertinacity in keeping up worship in his family, evening and morning, was truly commendable. Whether in one Church or another, or in no Church at all, the family altar was never abandoned. The writer, however, who was often a temporary boarder in his family, is of opinion that his family devotions—as to manner and time—might have been rendered more agreeable, if not more useful, to the juveniles of the family. In the first place they were often too lengthy. A long lesson was read; then *one of* Watts' hymns or psalms was repeated and sung, line at a time, which was succeeded by a prayer, the details of which—nearly

always in the same words and order of sentences—embraced everything that a Christian might reasonably pray for. In the next place the evening devotions were deferred to an hour too late for children who were tired with the labors and romps of the day and needed early repose. The consequence was the youngsters often went to sleep on their knees, and after the conclusion of the prayer had to be called up for bed. The author has had ample experience in the rearing of children, and is fully persuaded in order to make family prayer both pleasant and useful to them it should not be tedious, and should be held at an early hour in the evening. While William Griffing lived near Selsertown he held his membership with Clear Creek Church, near Washington, and after moving into the Petit Gulf hills, a few miles east of Rodney, he transferred his membership to Fellowship Church, in communion with which he finally died. For a long series of years, commencing about 1821, he experienced some very sore trials in his Church relations. He took the lead in Fellowship Church in the protracted controversy about Freemasonry, and, being on the anti-Masonic side, was finally overruled, which resulted in his withdrawal from the Church. In this we think he erred. If a whole Church were to become hopelessly corrupt in doctrine and in morals a good Christian might be justifiable in withdrawing from it, provided he would immediately seek communion with some other body of consistent Christians. But this was not the case with Fellowship Church. The most of its members were still orthodox as to the Baptist creed and correct in their morals, and we think Mr. Griffing did wrong in voluntarily leaving the Church

because he thought some of its leading members in error on the mooted question, and had treated him unbrotherly. This was not only turning his back upon the good and worthy members of that particular Church, but virtually upon all the ministers and holy men and women of the same "faith and order" in the associated Baptist Churches, and was depriving himself of that union and communion with the spiritual body of Christ which is so essential to a growth in grace and to steadfastness in the work of the Lord. But the deed was done; and for several years Mr. Griffing was in a very unpleasant position. He was a Christian from principle and from an abiding sense of the highest moral obligations, and was too good a man to go back to the world, and too good a Baptist to offer himself for membership in any other Church. He remained in his voluntary exile from the Church several years, but still he was diligent in all his Christian duties, both public and private, as far as a man out of the Church might be. His tenderness of spirit and his evident sincerity challenged the confidence of all who knew him. His family devotions were kept up, and his place was generally filled by himself at the prayer-meeting and in the Church, but his voice was not heard in the monthly conference, nor did he unite with the sacramental host in commemorating the sufferings and death of the blessed Savior for many years.

While in this anomalous position the adherents of Alexander Campbell began to visit the country, and not only request, but almost claim the privilege of preaching in all the Baptist Churches. The new-comers professed to be divinely-appointed Reformers, and the object

of their mission was to blot out all denominational lines, and unite all the people of God together in one common brotherhood, under the style of the Christian Church. Mr. Griffing was very favorably impressed with this new proposition, which was heralded from every pulpit where they preached. He welcomed the ministers to the hospitalities of his house—became a deeply interested reader of the writings of Alexander Campbell, which greatly modified his Calvinistic creed and his former views of Church polity, which resulted in his building a house of worship on his own premises, open to all Protestant ministers, and called "The Christian Church." But in all this he was doomed to a bitter, but profitable, disappointment. The Campbellite epidemic soon subsided; the visits of the Reformers became less frequent, until they ceased entirely; his "Christian Church" became extinct; his house of worship, abandoned by ministers of every name, was converted into a family residence, and the venerable man, now far down the wintry side of life's decline, found himself once more without Church fellowship. He had learned much in the school of bitter experience, and questions of the greatest importance, both to himself and to his family, thrust themselves upon his mind and demanded prompt and decisive answers. Had he done right in withdrawing from the Church? Would it not be best for himself, his family, and all concerned, for him to return to her bosom? Was it too late for him to recover what he had lost by his voluntary exile from the Church of his early love, and to leave the savor of a good example to his children when he departed this life? In the meantime the Masonic controversy and Campbellite excitement

had been numbered with past events. Fellowship Church had survived both storms, and was still in a permanently prosperous condition, having made many valuable additions to her membership. There was nothing good to be achieved by remaining out of her pale; there was much to be gained by entering it. He accordingly appeared at her door and meekly asked for re-admission. A brother asked if "he had renounced his Campbellite heresies?" He laconically replied that "his voluntary application for admission in their Church ought to be a sufficient guarantee that he subscribed to her faith and order in all essential matters." He was re-admitted, and the right hand of fellowship again cordially extended to him. That was a day of joy and gladness to himself, his family and the Church. Mr. Griffing now, with renewed courage, betook himself to the faithful discharge of all his Church obligations. The hospitalities of his household were again enjoyed by the ministers of his Church, as in former years, and he again became a happy and useful member of the Christian community in which he had spent so many of the best years of his early manhood. He read his Bible and the Church papers incessantly, took a deep interest in all that pertained to the prosperity of the Church, and filled his place in her solemn assemblies until literally worn out by slowly-declining years. He attained to a great age, and when his mind seemed to close in from the things of earth, it was still filled and busied with his church relations and Christian duties. He left a numerous family of children and grandchildren, many of whom are worthy members of the Baptist Church. His widow, the last living child of John Jones, yet survives

(February, 1865), and is deservedly reckoned a mother in Israel.

Phebe Jones was the sister of William Griffing, and daughter-in-law of John Jones, of early Baptist notoriety. She was a tender-hearted, piously-inclined girl, her early predelections being in favor of the creed of her Pedo-Baptist ancestors. Though she had been a praying woman for years, she had no satisfactory assurance of her acceptance in Christ until after the birth and subsequent death of her first child. He had lived long enough to become doubly dear to her heart, and she felt the loss of her first born as only a mother can feel. In her bereavement she was led to seek more earnestly than ever for "a knowledge of salvation in the forgiveness of her sins." The lonely grave of her dear William was selected as her place of prayer, and one day while she was earnestly pouring out her soul in supplication to a forgiving God, the reality of the Savior's sufferings, death and intercession for her came before the eyes of her faith, and she was enabled to rely fully upon Him as a present, willing and all-sufficient Savior. She now felt an assurance that her sins were all forgiven, and that she was adopted into the household of faith. She entered upon the duties and enjoyments of her new-born life with alacrity and delight. The next thing was to fix permanently her Church relations. She lived at that time in what was then a frontier settlement on the north fork of Cole's Creek, a considerable distance from any Church organization. Most of her father's family had joined the Methodist Episcopal Church, and she would willingly have done so, too, but she had heard so much said in

favor of baptism by immersion and believers' baptism by the Baptist relations of her husband that she became unsettled as to the validity of infant baptism, or adult baptism by effusion, and accordingly applied for admission into the First Baptist Church at Salem. Having now become a member of the visible Church, she felt more than ever the obligation of establishing the worship of God in her family. "Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not, and upon the *families* that call not on thy name," was continually ringing in her ears, and she felt that she could not have the protection and blessing of God upon her family, or even escape his wrath, if he was not acknowledged and worshiped in her household. She earnestly entreated her husband, who, though a man of pure morals and great reverence for Christianity, was not a member of any Church, to establish and conduct family worship in their young household. He excused himself upon the ground that he was not a professor of religion, and that though he tried to pray for himself in secret it would be mockery for him to attempt to pray a general prayer for others. But Mrs. Jones was not satisfied to live without family prayer—felt indeed that she could not brave the danger of such delinquency—and, with true Christian heroism, determined on her final course, which was to have another affectionate conversation with her husband on the subject, and in case he positively declined, to undertake it herself. They were quietly seated by the fire after supper, when she again introduced the subject. Mr. Jones again excused himself upon his former pleas, when she arose to her feet and turning her face to her chair, said, "Let us pray,"

and immediately bowed upon her knees—her husband following her example—and offered up an appropriate prayer. Her husband, seeing her heart was set on having praying in her family, generously proposed what he considered, under the circumstances, an equitable division of the work. He agreed to ask a blessing at the table, and to read a chapter as a preliminary to family prayer, if she would lead in prayer. To this she readily acceded, and upon this plan it was kept up until his death many years afterward. Mr. Jones lived until they had ten children, four of which died in infancy. He died during the last war between England and the United States, and left her with a family of one daughter and five sons, the oldest being only about eleven or twelve years of age. She sensibly felt the responsibilities of her situation, and was truly "diligent in business and fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." Her family devotions were attended to with renewed earnestness, and she embraced every opportunity to attend the stated meetings of her Church, twelve miles distant from home, until the organization of Fellowship Church in her own vicinity, to which she transferred her membership. One of her single brothers who had been in the calvary service as a volunteer under Gen. Thomas Hinds, and who was at home on short furlough, called to bid her farewell one night, and consented to rest awhile upon condition that she would let him start a long time before day. She consented to the arrangement, and after giving him a frugal meal and her blessing, he left for the campaign around New Orleans. Supposing her children yet asleep, she knelt at the foot of her bed to commend her departing brother to the

protection of God amid the perils of the battle-field. She became so much engaged that her whispered prayer became audible, and such pleadings with God to preserve a dear brother in the hour of danger has seldom been heard. He was preserved in several hard-fought battles, and permitted to return in safety. After remaining a widow four or five years, Mrs. Jones accepted the hand of a clever widower with four children, by the name of Henry Craig, who lived on an adjoining farm. The united families got along remarkably well together as a general rule, until they were separated by the death of Mr. Craig, which occurred in less than three years, except in the matter of family worship. Mrs. Craig, as we shall henceforth call her, found her second husband, though a moral man, and respectful to religion in general, far more intractable than her first in regard to family worship. She could not prevail on him to take any part with her at the family altar, or even to ask a blessing at the table, and for some cause never fully explained to her children, family prayer was laid aside until his death, except when he was temporarily away from home, or some other person was present to officiate. The religious instruction of her children, however, was habitually attended to, and every effort that a faithful mother could make to restrain them from the common vices of the country was made.

Mr. Craig soon fell into bad health, and in less than three years from the date of their marriage he died. The burial was completed in the afternoon and all the attendants went-away leaving the widow alone with her six children and four step-children. Supper was brought in early and soon disposed of, and then the children

were again invited to come around the long-neglected family altar. In a brief address she informed them of the anguish of spirit she had often felt on account of the abrogation of worship in her family, but now, as no further obstacle was in the way, she intended to re-establish it and keep it up until physically disabled or her place should be supplied by some one else. Then followed the reading of the Scriptures and one of her fervent and eloquent prayers. That night is yet recollected by the writer as one of joy and gladness. There seemed to be a brightness around that family altar above the shining of the candle. God be praised for the influence of family prayer upon our young hearts! It was during her second widowhood that Mrs. Craig seemed to excel in all the excellencies of her Christian character. Having regained the entire control of her family in religious matters she seemed determined to improve her opportunities. Her older children, especially, were passing a dangerous crisis, and she was anxious to see them truly converted to godliness in the days of their youth. Her family government was of the most scriptural character. For delinquencies in work or disobedience to family government she sometimes reprimanded sternly, but for moral delinquencies, or sins against God, she admonished in the most affectionate manner, and exhorted to repentance and reformation with an earnestness that touched the heart and made the young rebel against God feel that there was impending danger. The rod was so seldom used as to be scarcely recollected. Suitable books were procured for her children, and proper inducements offered to secure the reading of them, so that her family became one of

the most reading families in the community. Her table conversation was both pleasing and profitable. Some of the most impressive lessons her children ever received from her lips were given while eating their meals. But it was at the family altar she excelled. She prayed in a low, smooth, gently-flowing, earnest tone of voice, that was truly impressive. Her language was well selected, and she seldom showed any embarrassment while engaged in prayer. She encouraged her children to attend every place of worship in their reach. After the organization of Caneridge Methodist Episcopal Church, in the vicinity of Fellowship, about 1818—of which Mrs. Craig's three remaining sisters were members—it became the resort of herself and family when there was no service in her own Church, and she habitually remained in class-meeting with her sisters. Some one suggested that, perhaps, the Methodists would look upon this as an imposition and violation of their rule. She replied that "she could not voluntarily turn her back upon the people of God, and she intended to remain in class-meeting until the Methodis s informed her that her presence was no longer acceptable." This they never did, and by common consent she was permitted to enjoy class-meeting with her Methodist sisters until the close of life.

Within a few years of her death she had the happiness of seeing several of her children united with the Church. Her daughter became a Baptist, and several of her sons united with the Methodists. It may be asked "why her children, who had such unbounded confidence in her good sense and piety, did not all unite with the Church of her choice?" There were several

reasons why they did not. 1. In the training of her children her great object was to lead them, under the blessing of God, to become true Christians in heart and in life, and not bigots or sectarians: hence her teaching was restricted mainly to the primary and essential doctrines of Christianity; and they were taught to respect and reverence all good Christian people. 2. Many of her near relations, with whom her children associated, were warm-hearted Methodists, and one of her brothers was a prominent local minister in the Methodist Episcopal Church. 3. But what contributed more, just at that time, in leading her children into the Methodist Church was, perhaps, the vast difference in the spiritual and working condition of the two Churches. The Baptist Church was distracted and torn by the controversy about Free Masonry, and her members were not in a condition to sympathize with awakened and penitent sinners who were striving against sin and unbelief, and struggling into spiritual life; but the Methodist Church had peace and harmony and was in good working order. Her class and prayer meetings were well attended, and her membership all alive to the spiritual wants of those around her. Caneridge Church was just then entering into the greatest revival ever known in that region up to that date, and it was very natural for her awakened children to go among those who cared for their souls, and who counseled and prayed for them. Early in the summer of 1822 Mrs. Creaig was prostrated by the disease that terminated her earthly existence the following spring. In connection with this there was a trying point and a touching incident. She found herself wholly unable one night to officiate at the family altar,

being confined to her bed with severe illness. Said she to her oldest son, then about eighteen, "My son, I am not able to pray with my family to-night. God has lately given you an evidence of your acceptance in Christ Jesus—so I have heard; will you not take your mother's place, and pray with your sister and brothers? I can not bear to see them go to bed without prayer, if it can be helped." The eloquence of that appeal could not be resisted. With fear and trembling he read a chapter and tried to pray. She saw his evident embarrassment, but she encouraged him from time to time, until it became his joy and delight to pray in the family, as it had long been hers. Feeling that her end was drawing near, she became somewhat careful and troubled about her domestic affairs, and the future destiny of her children, all yet in a state of minority except her daughter. Her faithful pastor, Elder McCall, observing this, admonished her suitably against it, and advised her to commit all into the hands of God, and content herself simply to do her duty, as far as she was able, until released from the toils and sufferings of earth. The admonition and advice was well received, and from that time she manifested the most perfect patience and resignation to the will of God in all things. Not long before her death she invited her oldest son to the bedside, and, reminding him of what God had done for him in the forgiveness of his sins, and in adopting him into the household of faith, deliberately committed the spiritual interests of his younger brothers to his Christian care, and exhorted him to take her place in their religious training. The responsibility thus thrown upon his young heart was sensibly felt at the time, and after the lapse of more

than forty years it has been but partially relieved by an humble hope that four of the number—including the sister—are already in Paradise. After being perfected in the crucible of suffering, Mrs. Creaig died in hope of a blissful immortality, on the 10th of May, 1823. Her children had lost a good father and step-father, but they never realized what orphanage was until they saw that dear mother laid in the grave. May we all meet her in that "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens!"

Litttleton Mundy belonged to what may be considered the second generation of Baptists in Mississippi. His residence for a long time previous to his death was near Hamburg, in Franklin county. There were a few facts connected with his original conversion and subsequent Christian life worthy of being remembered. From what we have heard him say, we suppose he was awakened to an affecting sense of his sins, his guilt and his danger, in connection with the first great revival at Salem, when he was quite a young man. He had been raised without any literary education, and was almost wholly ignorant of the plan of salvation. His conviction of sin was deep and pungent. He felt that he was indeed a child of wrath, and in danger of eternal damnation. While praying to God day and night for mercy, his mind was bewildered, and he could not see how he was to escape impending wrath. He thought his case one of unusual difficulty. Others might obtain mercy in the forgiveness of their sins, even the vilest of the vile, but there seemed to be no mercy for him. In his estimation his religious counselors and comforters did not seem to understand his case. His countenance was

habitually sad, and a gloom, devoid of hope, seemed to be settling down upon him. In this condition he took a violent cold, followed by a deep-seated cough, and he imagined that he had all the premonitory symptoms of an approaching consumption, and that in this way God was going to cut him off, and send him to his well-deserved perdition. He determined to go to Washington and consult an eminent physician about his case, in hopes that his sinful life might be somewhat protracted thereby. Deeply afflicted in mind, and, as he supposed, in body also, he set out with two Baptist preachers who were going in that direction, to whom he unbosomed himself without reserve. They saw into his condition at once and directed him to the sinner's only hope, the sinner's only remedy, an all sufficient and willing Savior, who is "able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." Unbelief now began to loosen its iron grasp upon his soul, and a living faith began to take the place of his former despair. He intentionally fell behind his company that he might uninterruptedly meditate upon what he had heard, and give himself more earnestly to prayer. The time of his deliverance had come. There was an unreserved yielding of his whole soul to be saved, in God's way and upon God's terms. Suddenly the burden of sin and guilt was gone. Peace and joy sprang up in his soul. His heart overflowed with love to God and man, and he hastened to overtake his company that he might tell them what great things the Lord had done for him. His consumptive symptoms rapidly disappeared; he felt too well now to have the consumption, and declined going any further to con-

sult a physician about his case. He had fallen in with the Great Physician, who is able to heal both soul and body. He united with the Baptist Church and became a strict Baptist, both in principle and practice, though he was charitable in his feelings toward all orderly Christian people. Though without literary attainments, he was a man of superior judgment in business matters, was frugal and industrious, and lived to raise a large family and to accumulate a large property. He once overheard the writer relating his Christian experience in a love-feast, and remarked to him afterward that he ought to have been a Baptist, for he had a good Baptist experience. The writer then drew him out with a relation of his experience, and returned the compliment by telling him that he ought to have been a Methodist, as he had a good Methodist experience. When we got into conversation with each other on the subject of personal experience, we seemed not to realize the fact that we belonged to different branches of the Church. He finished his course in peace many years ago, and went to his reward.

We have now concluded all the historical and biographical sketches of the early Baptist Churches and individual ministers and members that our plan will allow. Not only "these," but hundreds more, "all died in faith," and will have part in "the resurrection of the just," and in the heavenly city.

CHAPTER V.

Protestant Episcopal Church first represented in the Natchez Country by Adam Cloud—First a Methodist minister—Probable reason of his change—Came to Natchez in 1792—His advent hailed with joy by the Pedo-Baptist Protestants—Persecuted and taken prisoner by the Catholic Spaniards—Sent a prisoner to New Orleans—Two alternatives—His choice—His property lost—His family joins him in New Orleans and he leaves the country—Returns in 1810—Organizes "Christ's Church" at Churchhill, in Jefferson county—How he spent the remainder of his life—Dies at Brazoria, in Texas.

The next Protestant Church in the order of time that was represented in the Natchez District of the Province of West Florida was the Protestant Episcopal Church. The author regrets the scantiness of his materials in reference to the introduction of this Church into Mississippi and the Southwest at an early period. Either they do not exist, or he has not been able to find their places of deposit. Tradition is also silent, except in the case of Adam Cloud, and the presumption is that this Church had but few representatives in this country before the close of the first decade of the present century. We may safely presume that Adam Cloud was the first Protestant Episcopal minister that came to this country under the Provisional Government, and, perhaps, the only one, as neither written or oral testimony refers to any other. Rev. Adam Cloud was born in New Castle county, Delaware, December 30, 1759. Of his early history we have no account. In 1781 he was admitted on trial as a traveling preacher in the Methodist connection, and appointed on Roanoke Circuit, in Virginia, as the junior of Enoch Matson. He received an appointment as a traveling Methodist preacher for seven successive years, until in 1788—in the language of the printed minutes—he "desisted from traveling in

connection with, and under the direction of, our Conference." It is likely Mr. Cloud did not succeed very well as an itinerant Methodist preacher, as he was appointed junior preacher on six of the seven Circuits he traveled. The printed minutes of the Methodist connection are not very satisfactory as to his grade of office at the time he "desisted from traveling in connection with" the Conference. He had been ordained deacon, and perhaps Elder, before he left the Methodist Episcopal Church. He was married to Mary Grandine, near Morristown, in the State of New Jersey, January 31, 1788, and his marriage may have been the cause why he desisted from traveling under the direction of the Methodist Conference, as the support of married preachers was exceedingly parsimonious in those early times. He subsequently entered the ministry of the newly-organized Protestant Episcopal Church, and in that character emigrated to the far-famed Natchez Country, in 1792, and settled on St. Catherine's Creek, about two miles from Natchez, just below where the road to Washington crosses. Mr. Cloud probably brought several slaves with him from New Jersey, as it is known that he soon after had them in possession. He acquired a title to 1700 acres of land in the District, and soon gave evidence of thrift in the way of a good stock of hogs, cattle and horses. His settlement in the country was hailed with acclamations of joy by the Protestant families, especially such as adhered to the Episcopal Church, and all others who desired to have their children baptised, for, since the death of Samuel Swayze, in 1784, they had been deprived of that privilege. Though all public Protestant worship was

still under the interdict of the Spanish Government, Mr. Cloud was successfully importuned to preach an occasional sermon, baptise the children, marry the young folks and bury the dead. It was thought at first that the American feeling and influence was strong enough to protect him in these holy Christian ministrations, so far at least as to secure the conivance of the Spaniards. But in this they were mistaken. The emissaries of the lynx-eyed priesthood carefully noticed and reported at headquarters all the movements of Mr. Cloud, and it was soon determined to end his labor of love among the people. At the end of about three years from his first settlement in the country a file of armed soldiers from Natchez, entered his house in the middle of the night and forcibly securing his person, hurried off with him to the headquarters of Gayoso. He was confined as a prisoner in Natchez several days, when it was determined to send him bound to Carondelet, the Governor-General, at New Orleans. The objects contemplated by this movement seem to have been to get him as far as possible from the sympathy and protection of his friends, and to deprive him of any palliating testimony he might be able to avail himself of in the vicinity of Natchez. Two soldiers were detailed to conduct him to New Orleans, who placed him in fetters on board a common pirouge, and in that way descended the Mississippi river to the place of destination, a distance then of three hundred miles. The allegations against Mr. Cloud were for "preaching, baptizing and marrying people contrary to the laws of the existing Government." On his arrival at New Orleans he was duly committed for trial. After long delay, under pretense

of a careful investigation of his case, Governor Carondelet submitted two alternatives to him, one of which he was compelled to accept. Either he must go to Cuba or Spain and be tried by an ecclesiastical court upon the specified allegations, or he must leave forever the Spanish dominions. If Mr. Cloud had crouched at the feet of his persecutors and asked their forgiveness for the past, with a promise to abstain from preaching in the future, no doubt they would have set him at liberty and permitted him quietly to return to his home and family. But he was firmly fixed in the doctrines of the Protestant faith, and this he would not, aye, felt that he could not do. He maintained a firm and dignified bearing throughout this trying ordeal, and would have preferred a martyr's fate to a renunciation of his faith and ministerial obligations. When the final alternative was submitted to him for his choice, he was ready for a prompt decision. He was too well acquainted with the history of the devil-invented Spanish Inquisition to risk himself before one of their ecclesiastical courts under a charge of heretical preaching. Moreover, being yet in the prime of life, he knew if he could regain his liberty without a sacrifice of principle he might yet be worth something to his family and the world. The latter alternative was chosen, and in view of a command to carry it out speedily, he sent to Natchez for his family to join him as soon as possible. Except the sum of three hundred dollars and one bed and bedding, his property was all left behind and was lost to his family. We have no evidence that even his few servants were permitted to accompany their mistress.

Mrs. Cloud, with her four children — the two eldest daughters, the youngest an infant — with only three hundred dollars to pay expenses, took passage in a small row boat at Natchez and, after a tedious voyage, joined her husband in New Orleans. They were sent off on the first vessel sailing for the United States, which was a small schooner bound for Charleston, South Carolina. How Mr. Cloud passed the next twenty years of his life we are not informed, except that he lived and preached several years in Savannah, Georgia, with but little success. In 1816 he returned to Mississippi as a minister of the Protestant Episcopal Church, and settled near Greenville, in Jefferson county. If any Protestant Episcopal Church was organized in the Territory previous to that date, he had no agency in it. About the year 1820 an Episcopal Church was organized in the southwestern portion of Jefferson county, called Christ's Church, at a place now called Churchhill, of which he was rector for several years. After his term of service ended here he never again took the pastoral oversight of a church in Mississippi. Being now about sixty-five years old, he was hardly capable of performing pastoral duty, and, moreover, he was not very acceptable to the High-Churchmen who now took the lead in his branch of the Church. Tradition says that he exhibited no evidences of ordination except such as he had received from the bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church while in connection with them. Perhaps, in common with the Methodist Episcopalians generally, he had adopted the views of Lord King, Bishops Hooker, Stillingfleet, and other eminent divines and historians of our English Church on the subject of ordination, and was too well

satisfied with the ordination received from Bishop Asbury to seek any other. But, though without a pastoral charge, the venerable man, as his strength permitted and occasion offered, continued to "preach, marry the young folks, baptize the children and bury the dead," according to the Ritual of his Church, for doing which, thirty years before, he had suffered the loss of his property and been cruelly expelled from the country. After his return to Mississippi, by patient industry and economy, he acquired a handsome little estate, sufficient to make him comfortable in the evening of life. Not long before his death he removed to Texas, and settled at Brazoria, where, in May, 1834, he finished his eventful pilgrimage on earth at the advanced age of seventy-five. His remains were deposited in the common grave-yard of that place to await "the resurrection of the just." Whether his grave is suitably marked or not the writer does not know, nor is it of the least importance to the quiet sleeper there; but posterity ought to know where reposes the dust of such a man. In our youth we knew him well.

CHAPTER VI.

Introduction of Methodism into America—Its rapid spread—Tobias Gibson, first Methodist Missionary to the "Natchez Country"—Evidence of his being here in the spring of 1799—Success in forming Churches—Reinforcements—The Natchez District included, at different dates, in various Conferences—Organized into a quasi-Conference, November 1st, 1813—Three other similar Conferences held—First legal Conference—Extent of territory embraced in it.

The next Protestant Denomination in the order of time that was represented in the Mississippi Territory was the Methodist Episcopal Church. That form of Evangelical Christianity known as Methodism was first introduced into America in 1760. The writer is aware that most of the annalists of this Church fix its introduction into America as late as 1766, but in this we believe they are mistaken. By facts and dates of undoubted authority furnished the January number of the "Quarterly Review of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, for 1859," by George C. M. Roberts, of Baltimore, it is evident that Philip Embury introduced Methodism into the city of New York in 1760, and that Robert Strawbridge introduced it into Maryland the same year.

Previous to the Revolutionary war it had spread extensively through the Colonies; during the war it was still surprisingly successful, and after the war closed its spread became general in the United States. Toward the close of the last century the ever-wakeful eye of Bishop Asbury—the General Superintendent of the Methodist Episcopal Church—rested with increasing interest on the far-famed "Natchez Country," which was evidently destined to be settled speedily by an American population. At the Conference held in

Charleston, South Carolina, January 1st, 1799, he fixed on the Rev. Tobias Gibson, of that Conference, to be the first missionary to explore this country, as the standard-bearer of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Mr. Gibson had already been engaged eight years in the pastoral work, and was every way worthy and well qualified for such an important trust. He was unmarried, and possessed a handsome estate for the times, in addition to which his failing health required a more Southern climate. He also had an intelligent, wealthy and influential family connection already settled in the vicinity of Natchez, by whom he would be cordially received and hospitably entertained. His name appears in the printed minutes as preacher in charge of Little Pedee and Anson circuit in 1799, with Britton Capel and Lewis Myers as his colleagues; but this appointment was doubtless made with the understanding that he was to leave his circuit in the hands of his co-laborers, and on the opening of spring proceed as a missionary to the Natchez Country. He traveled across the country from his circuit to the Cumberland river—a distance, it is said, of about six hundred miles—where he disposed of his horse, and, procuring a canoe, put his traveling equipage aboard, and paddled himself out of the Cumberland into the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. Somewhere on the passage down the Mississippi he was taken on board some other water craft—perhaps a family or trading flat-boat—and landed at Natchez early in the spring of 1799. The writer has been enabled to fix the time of his arrival from the following facts: Our family record shows that on the 10th of October, 1799, he celebrated the rites of matrimony between Jonathan Jones

and Miss Phebe Griffing, at the residence of John Griffing, the bride's father, about twelve miles from Natchez, and it is a well-ascertained fact, which the author of these sketches received from several of the family of Mr. Griffing, since dead, that he first visited them the preceding March or April. He was continued here in 1800, and his name so appears in the printed minutes. Mr. Gibson entered on the object of his mission immediately on his arrival, and soon after organized the first Methodist Church in Washington, six miles from Natchez—Washington being the seat of the Territorial Government. The first time he opened the door of the Church he received eight persons—six white and two colored—most, if not all, of whom lived to a great age, and seemed to be faithful unto death. Soon after his arrival in the country he visited Kingston, to look after the remains of the Congregational Church formed there in 1773 by Rev. Samuel Swayze, which, since his death, in 1784, had been as "sheep without a shepherd." Here he found a people already prepared of the Lord and ready to receive him; for, notwithstanding their Calvinistic proclivities, but few of this extensive connection seemed inclined to unite with the Baptists. They had been accustomed to an educated ministry, and the elevated talents, polished manners, and overflowing affection of Mr. Gibson corresponded with their previous training and modes of thinking. He also found a considerable branch of the Swayze connection settled near Selsertown, and having appointed preaching at the house of John Griffing, soon after received most of his family, with several others, into the Church. Most of these, also, some of whom lived to extreme old age, were

faithful to the end of life. Mr. Gibson visited at an early day most of the important settlements in the western portion of the Territory, between Fort Adams and the Walnut Hills, near the present site of Vicksburg, in most of which he laid the foundation of future Churches. In 1800 and 1801 this remote and extensive missionary circuit was still held as an outpost of the South Carolina Conference, but in 1802 it was attached to the Great Western Conference, and included in the Kentucky District, with Mr. Gibson still continued as preacher in charge. Seeing this new field "already white unto the harvest," and feeling that his failing health and strength were not sufficient to gather the sheaves into the garner of God, he traveled on horseback through the intervening Indian tribes to the seat of the Western Conference, and earnestly solicited help. Bishop Asbury was unwilling to send any preacher on such a perilous journey, and to a circuit so remote, without first obtaining his full consent to go. He accordingly called, in open Conference, for a volunteer. After due deliberation Moses Floyd, a promising young preacher of three years' standing, and who was ordained Elder at this Conference, one year before the regular time in course in view of his coming as a missionary to this country, offered himself, and was accordingly appointed to Natchez with Mr. Gibson, in a supernumerary relation, as his assistant. In 1804 they were further reinforced by Hezkiah Harriman and Abraham Amos; Floyd and Harriman being placed on the circuit as effective men, and Amos and Gibson as supernumeraries. Mr. Gibson died in what is now Warren county, about six miles south of where Vicksburg now stands, on the 5th of April, 1804. His

Christian and ministerial life and labors will be more amply detailed in the appropriate place. As the Natchez circuit was included in the far-famed Western Conference from 1802 to 1806, it may be well, for the convenience as well as instruction of our readers, to define, as near as possble, the bounds of that Conference. It was bounded on the east by the Apalachian chain, on the north by the Canadian lakes, on the south by the Gulf coast, and on the west by sun-set, or as near thereunto as Anglo-Saxon feet had "trod the soil." An ample domain, certainly, to be traversed annually by from about twenty-five to sixty preachers, as it was previous to 1807. In 1802 William McKendree was Presiding Elder on the Kentucky District, in which Natchez was included, but as we have no intimation of his being in this far off country at that date, it is presumed he left it entirely to the management of its pastor, Tobias Gibson. From 1803 to 1806 Natchez was included in the Cumberland District, with John Page for Presiding Elder in 1803, and Lewis Garrett in 1804–5. It is presumed neither of them visited the Natchez portion of their District, for though when first formed it embraced only four circuits, Nashville and Natchez were both included. At the time of which we write, Natchez Circuit had within its bounds one hundred and thirty-two white members and seventy-two colored. In 1806 the Natchez Circuit was divided into three, called Natchez, with Wilkinson on the south and Claibourne on the north, to which Opelousas, in southwestern Louisiana, was added, and the four erected into the Mississippi District, with Lauuer Blackman as Presiding Elder. As this is the first time the writer has had occa-

sion to mention the name of Mr. Blackman, he wishes it distinctly understood that he believes the correct orthography of his first name is Launer, and not Learner or Learned, as it is almost universally spelled in the printed minutes, and by the annalists of the Church. Some years ago a writer, who signed himself "A Tennessean," who was well acquainted with Mr. Blackman, published a paper in the Nashville *Christian Advocate*, the object of which was to restore his name to its proper orthography of Launer. The author of these sketches coincided with him, and in support of this opinion adduced the following facts: He was generally called Launer Blackman in Mississippi, especially by the early Methodists who were intimate with him all the time of his sojourn in this country. Rev. James Griffing, who commenced his ministerial labors by traveling with Mr. Blackman, always called his first name Launer, and in honor of him named his first son Launer Blackman, to which name he has answered nearly sixty years. So we conclude his first name was Launer, the authority of the printed minutes to the contrary notwithstanding.

Previous to 1806 the whole of the Natchez Country had been included in one vast Circuit, with only two effective ministers to supply it; but they, by making a round each in four, six, or eight weeks, and preaching nearly every day, and often at night, were enabled to supply the people with the gospel of salvation and the ordinances of the Church.

In the formation of this new District, for the first time, a portion of Louisiana is mentioned as included in the regular work, though, doubtless, portions of it had been

visited by the pioneer preachers before. The Mississippi District was continued under the Presidency of Launer Blackman in 1807, with the addition of Ouachita (Washita) Circuit, in the Northern part of Louisiana. It embraced the same Circuits in 1808, with Jacob Young for Presiding Elder, and the same in 1809–10, with John McClure for Presiding Elder. In 1808 Mathew P. Sturdevant, of the South Carolina Conference, was sent to form a Mission Circuit on the Tombeckbee river, which was added to the Oconee District of that Conference. This is the first mention of any work being recognized in the Alabama portion of the Mississippi Territory. In 1809 Michael Burge was appointed in charge of Tombeckbee, and M. P. Sturdevant was continued as a Missionary, for the purpose of making further explorations and additions to the Circuit; for it does not appear that any new work was formed in that section for a number of years. This Circuit was low down on the Tombeckbee river, in what is now Washington and Clark counties, and was continued as an outpost of the South Carolina Conference until 1812, at which time it numbered 126 white and 14 colored members, and was then transferred to the Mississippi District, with William Houston and Isaac Quinn, of the Western Conference, for their ministers. In 1811 Miles Harper was Presiding Elder on the Mississippi District, and Amite Circuit, embracing a large scope of country in, and adjacent to, the valley of Amite river, both in Mississippi and Eastern Louisiana, was added, and Opelousas Circuit was divided, one part being called Rapides and the other Attakapas. In 1812 Samuel Dunwody, of the South Carolina Conference,

was Presiding Elder, and Tombeckbee and New Orleans were added as additional charges. Miles Harper—the Presiding Elder of the previous year—was appointed to New Orleans, but, like his successors for many years afterward, made but little impression on the mixed population of that city. The Tennessee Conference having been organized in 1813, the Mississippi District was included in it, with Samuel Sellers for Presiding Elder. With the addition of a new Circuit called Pearl river, the District had become large enough to justify a division. This division was called for especially by the annual inundations of the Mississippi river, which rendered it extremely difficult, not to say impossible, several months in the year, for the Presiding Elder to cross over to the western portion of his District. Accordingly the Louisiana District was set off, with Miles Harper as Presiding Elder, who was required, in the meantime, to supply Washita Circuit as preacher in charge. From this time a new era commenced in the history of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Mississippi and Louisiana. The distance, danger and expense of traveling through the Indian nations, during the war of 1812 to 1815, to the places of holding the annual sessions of the Tennessee Conference were too great to justify the journey, so that the preachers with almost entire unanimity declined going. In view of these facts the General Conference of 1812 authorized the organization of an annual Conference in Mississippi whenever it should be deemed necessary. Accordingly the preachers of the Tennessee Conference, who were south of the Indian nations, assembled on the first of November, 1813, at the residence of Rev. Newit Vick, a local preacher living near

Springhill Church, in Jefferson county, Mississippi Territory, and organized themselves into a quasi Conference. The ministers present were Miles Harper, Samuel Sellers, Lewis Hobbs, Thomas Griffin, John S. Ford, Richmond Nolley, John Shrock and William Winans. The writer has not the means at hand of knowing whether Bishop Asbury or McKendree presided at the Tennessee Conference that year, but presumes it was Bishop McKendree, though Bishop Asbury may also have been present. Be this as it may, the ministers who were assembled at Mr. Vick's received a letter from the Bishop who presided at the Tennessee Conference, accompanied by an address from that Conference, informing them that the Bishop could not be with them in consequence of the danger of traveling through the Indian country, and that, therefore, a legal Conference could not be organized, but advising them to transact the usual business of an annual Conference, subject to a revision by the Tennessee Conference. The Bishop in his letter appointed Samuel Sellers President of this quasi Conference, and they elected William Winans Secretary, and conducted all their business in regular order. Jonathan Kemp, Simon Gentry, Thomas Owens, Peter James and Josiah B. Daughtry, were admitted on trial; Thomas Griffin, John S. Ford and William Winans were elected to Elders' orders; Lewis Hobbs was placed in a superannuated relation; Miles Harper was located at his own request, and Randall Gibson and George Fletcher were elected to Deacons' orders as local preachers. The minutes of this informal Conference were sent to the Tennessee Conference for revision and confirmation, which invested its transactions with complete

ecclesiastical authority, and hence the non-appearance of the minutes among the papers of the Mississippi Conference. If they exist at all, it is in the archives of the Tennessee Conference. The only item in the minutes objected to by the Tennessee Conference was the appropriation of a small lot of the connectional books on sale in the country to the support of Willam Winans, who was appointed to New Orleans with but little prospect of an adequate support from a people so indifferent to the claims of Christianity as they were up to that date.

Two ~~Three~~ other similar Conferences were held without a Bishop, whose absence was occasioned by the same obstacles that kept him away from the first. At these Conferences they admitted preachers on trial, received them into full connection, elected to Deacons and Elders' orders, passed upon each other's character, collected their statistics, planned their work, assigned the preachers to their fields of labor, and then sent their minutes to the Tennessee Conference for approval in order to their incorporation in the general minutes. As the British and Indian war was still raging in 1814, the minutes of this incipient Conference either were not sent that year, or failed to reach their destination, which accounts for the non-appearace of the appointments in the printed minutes of that year. The General Conference met in the city of Baltimore, May 1, 1816, and on the 18th of the month the Mississippi Conference was formally set off from the Tennessee Conference, and its separate existence legalized by an act which reads thus: "The Mississippi Conference shall include all the State of Louisiana south of the

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Arkansas, and all the Mississippi Territory south of the Tennessee river," which Territory then extended eastward to the Chattahooche river. A reasonable portion of territory this, for the occupancy of ten preachers! Plenty of room here for "scope and verge!" No danger of getting in each other's way, or complaints of being crowded! Thanks to our mother, the Tennessee Conference, and to our grandmother, the famous old Western Conference, for such a rich inheritance. It is true it has cost the pioneer preachers an incalculable amount of bone and sinew, mind and money, as well as many long years of self-sacrifice to bring it into an advanced state of cultivation; but, by the blessing of God, they have succeeded, so that where toiled and suffered the original ten there are now several flourishing Annual Conferences, numbering hundreds of able ministers of the New Testament. But we are not to suppose that the pioneer preachers who traversed and cultivated those extensive fields were without enjoyments and advantages peculiar to their circumstances. They had pleasures in those days, such as their juniors of the present day, who are smothered up in their little circuits and town stations, with steamboats and railroads to take them to Conference and back, will never know. A local preacher, in our knowledge, was once employed to fill the place of an absentee on a Circuit; he set out with pleasing visions of warm receptions everywhere, the privilege of going to church daily, having large congregations and happy meetings, but on returning from his first round he gave it as his settled conviction, "that it took a very enterprising man to travel a Circuit;" and so it did in the days of which

we write. The itinerants then had to brave all sorts of weather, all stages of water, rides of all rideable distances, and food and lodging of all varieties. But there was a bright side to all this. There was the pleasure of ever-varying scenery and the romance of adventure. If they had not time, and books, and composure to get up a new sermon, the one they preached yesterday would do for to-morrow, as they would be twenty or thirty miles away from all who had heard it before. If they met a cold congregation to-day, or from any other cause got into the brush in preaching, they had no time for a conference with "blue devils," but a fair chance to strike fire and burn out at the appointment to-morrow. The first legal Conference was held at the house of Wm. Foster, of Pine Ridge, six miles north-east of Natchez, where one room of the dwelling answered the double purpose of a Conference room and sleeping apartment for all the preachers. It assembled late in 1816, hence it appears in the printed minutes for the following year. Bishop Robert R. Roberts, who had been elected and ordained at the General Conference held in Baltimore the preceding May, was present, and presided and preached, to the great satisfaction of both preachers and people. Thomas Griffin was appointed Presiding Elder on the Mississippi District, to which had been added a new Circuit called Chickasawhay, with six preachers under his superintendence; and Ashley Hewit was appointed Presiding Elder on the Louisiana District with only two preachers to labor with him, so that he had also to be the preacher on Washita Circuit. Many of the pioneers of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the Southwest having accomplished the object of their

mission—which was to plant Churches and found an Annual Conference—returned to their former Conferences and were never again in Mississippi; but others came in their places, some of whom we shall have occasion to notice hereafter. There had been a slow but steady increase of membership up to the formation of the Conference, at which time there were 1551 white and 410 colored members. It will not be necessary in these brief sketches to notice the multiplication of preachers and pastoral charges, nor to give the annual number in Church-fellowship, as these statistics can be found to better advantage in the bound volumes of the printed minutes.

CHAPTER VII.

History of an Old Steward's Book—Curious Extracts—Sketch of Tobias Gibson—Of Randall Gibson and William Foster, the First Stewards in Mississippi—Miles Harper—William Winans.

We have in Fayette Circuit, Mississippi Conference, one of the most interesting historical records to be found in the archives of Southern Methodism. It is the Steward's book, which, with but few omissions, has been regularly kept for sixty years. It contains the names of all the Presiding Elders of the District and preachers of the circuit in regular succession, with the amount of their claims and receipts, the manner of raising the money, and the places from whence it came, etc. The way this interesting record came into the hands of the present Board of Stewards of this circuit seems to have been this: The little tract of country now embraced in Fayette circuit was about the center of Tobias Gibson's original Natchez circuit, and as new circuits were set off from either end the records tended toward the center, so that when this got to be Cole's Creek circuit, about thirty-six years ago, with Reuben B. Ricketts for Recording Steward, tradition says he collected all the official records he could find pertaining to the finances of the circuit, as it had been and then was, and transcribed them into a suitable book; since which time John M. Folks and Benjamin F. Jones, his successors, continued the records with praiseworthy care to the death of Mr. Jones, February 6th, 1860; after which all the records were placed in the hands of Rev. George C. Armstrong, a local Elder of the circuit, by the Quarterly Conference, with a request that he transcribe the whole into a large ledger specially made for the pur-

pose, which has been done, including all late records up to date. The first entry in the book is as follows: "February 7th, 1805. The Mississippi Territory being one Circuit, William Foster and Randall Gibson, Stewards."

We now propose to give our readers an extract from this old record, in order to show them how the assessments for the support of the preachers were made in those days, and in what sort of currency they were paid. The account which we transcribe does not stand closed on the book, and probably that part relating to the transactions of the last quarter was lost. The credits were made on the 12th of August, and as neither of the preachers had received his disciplinary allowance, we take it for granted that other entries ought to have been made, but enough is found to answer our purpose. For 1809 the Stewards make the following assessment:

Rocky Spring, 1400 lbs seed cotton, at $2 50 per 100 lbs	$ 35 00
Hick's Class, 400 lbs " " " "	10 00
Clark's Creek, 400 lbs " " " "	10 00
Redlick Class, 1100 lbs " " " "	27 00
Hopewell, 870 lbs ginned cotton, sold for	133 75
" 330 lbs in Natchez unsold	

Credits: August 12th, by cash paid—

Anthony Houston's traveling expenses	$ 9 12½
Same quarterage	50 20
Same in 11¾ yards bagging	8 64
Same 14 lbs rope for bailing	1 46
Same 200 lbs seed cotton	5 00
J. McMinn's traveling expenses	1 00
Same quarterage	14 00
Issac McCown, quarterage	47 00
John McClure, P. E., quarterage	38 00
Same per barks for J. McMinn	2 00
Same for one bottle sacramental wine	1 00

We have introduced this extract, not only to show how the Stewards of the Church settled with their min-

isters, but also to give our readers some idea about the currency and commercial transactions of the times. The currency of the country in those days consisted almost exclusively of what were termed "gin receipts" and Spanish silver coin. About one man in a township—and in some places not more than one man in a county—was able to own a cotton gin. The cotton producers would haul their cotton to the gin in lots to suit their convenience, and after the gin-holder inspected it as to quality it was weighed in large baskets, made for the purpose, and passed into the gin. After deducting a tenth of the gross amount for toll the gin-holder gave the producer his receipt for the balance. The producer took this receipt to his principal merchant, with which he paid his store account, and received the balance in his favor in Spanish silver coin, with which he paid other accounts or made other purchases. The merchant holding these receipts was entitled to receive from the gin-holder, in ginned cotton, one-fourth of the weight of the seed cotton for which his receipts called, which he sent to his factor to be sold to the cotton brokers, which was generally done at a remunerative price, though sometimes at a loss. So we see that the preachers, who were paid either in seed or ginned cotton, had nothing to do either with the handling or selling of it. The Stewards indorsed over to them the gin-holders' receipts, which they used as paper currency in the payment of debts or in making purchases.

This old Steward's book incidentally brings to view another item of financial economy, which really looks penurious in our day. It was that of charging the preachers with the value of all the presents they received

in the way of handkerchiefs, hosiery, and other wearing apparel or traveling equipage. Fortunately for the feelings of the kind-hearted donors, as well as for the needy preachers, this item of financial economy has long since been abandoned.

We now propose to leave the further consideration of these statistical and financial matters, and write some sketches of the Christian experience and labors of a few of the men and women who were engaged in planting and nurturing the first Methodist Churches in this coun try. The first in order, of course, should be that of Tobias Gibson, the first Methodist Missionary to the Natchez Country. He was a native of South Carolina, and was born in what was then Liberty county, on Great Pee Dee river, November 10th, 1771. Of his early history we know nothing, except that his family was in easy circumstances and he received a fair education for the times. From the religious characteristics of the family connexion it is likely that they descended from the Portuguese Huguenots who fled from the violent persecution of the Papal Monarchs and Hierarchy in the sixteenth century and settled in the Carolinas. Mr. Gibson entered the ministry when about twenty years old, and labored zealously and indefatigably eight years on the large Circuits within the bounds of the original South Carolina Conference. As we have stated in a previous chapter, he was appointed by Bishop Asbury a missionary to the Natchez Country in 1799. To settle the fact more definitely that he arrived in this country in the spring of 1799, we will here add the testimony of Rev. James Griffing, a local Elder of long standing in the Methodist Episcopal

Church, and of Mrs. Abigail Scott, a younger sister of his, both of whom were received into the Church by the sainted Gibson. Mrs. Scott's testimony is, that she was present when Mr. Gibson solemnized the rites of matrimony between Jonathan Jones and her sister, Miss Phebe Griffing, in her father's house, about twelve miles from Natchez, on the 10th of October, 1799, and that he had then been in the country some time, and had become well acquainted with her father's family.

Rev. James Griffing, who was then a youth, states that Mr. Gibson first visited his father's family in the latter part of March, or the first half of April, the spring before the marriage of his sister Phebe to Jonathan Jones; and, in confirmation of the fact, adverted to the universal practice of planting the seed of the sweet potato crop here in the last half of March or the first half of April, and then stated that he was planting sweet potatoes, when one of the family announced to him the arrival of a stranger, and requested him to attend to the stabling of his horse. After putting up the horse, he concluded to take the house in his way back to the potato patch in order to ascertain who the stranger might be, and when introduced to Mr. Gibson as a Methodist minister—the first he had ever seen—the unusual sanctity of his countenance, conversation and manners so overwhelmed his youthful heart that he hastened from his presence. These recollections and facts, in addition to what has been said in a previous chapter, sufficiently settles the time of Mr. Gibson's advent into the Natchez Country. As to the extent and arduousness of his ministerial labors in this country, his ample and well-cultivated field will abundantly show

them; and as to his success, the fruits of his toils were everywhere to be seen in the awakening and conversion of sinners. In person Mr. Gibson was tall and spare, with fair complexion, light hair and piercing black eyes, and was considered handsome. The expression of his countenance, the cast of his conversation, and his general deportment in private life, were affectionate, but grave and solemn. As Mrs. Scott once remarked to the writer, "he seldom smiled, but often wept, especially in his public exercises." As to his style of preaching, those who knew him well represent him as quite above mediocrity; in his manner he was energetic and zealous, and while he did not fail "to declare the whole counsel of God" to all, he dealt much more in the pathetic than in the terrible, and was oftener amidst the melting scenes of Gethsemane and Calvary than amidst the lightning and thunder of Sinai's burning summit. The burden of his message to sinners was, "we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." He was also reckoned among the "sweet singers in Israel," and one of his favorite hymns is said to be the one commencing, "Vain, delusive world, adieu," found on the 415th page of the Methodist hymn-book, which he often sang with a countenance irradiated with the joys and hopes of the true Christian. Mr. Gibson was a close student, and redeemed as much time as possible from other imperious duties to devote to the study of the Holy Bible and such standard works on theology as he was able to obtain and carry with him on his long rides. It is said that he emancipated his patrimonial estate in slaves, which benevolent act resulted in no permanent good to them, such were

their indolent, improvident and licentious habits. He was in declining health when he first came to Mississippi, and he gradually wasted away until, by the beginning of 1804, he was fully superanuated. But as an additional evidence that even the best and holiest of men seldom know long beforehand the time of their departure from earth, Mr. Gibson contracted a matrimonial alliance with Miss Sarah Griffing not long before he was completely prostrated by the insidious disease that terminated his earthly existence. No one could justly reproach him for his affection for this amiable and pious girl, for she seemed well qualified, both by nature and grace, to be the wife of a minister. He had received her, with most of her father's family, into the Church soon after he came to the country, and had watched with increasing interest her evident growth in piety and zeal in the service of God, until he became satisfied that, if life was spared, she would be "a helpmeet for him." He sought and obtained her consent to enter the bonds of holy matrimony with him; but the friends of both parties, seeing Mr. Gilson was in a hopeless consumption, seriously advised them not to consummate the engagement, to which they reluctantly, but judiciously and piously consented. Their final conversation on the subject was said to have been full of the tenderest emotions, but beautified with Christian dignity and enlivened with mutual pledges to meet each other in heaven. This proved to be their final parting on earth. He preached his last sermon on New Year's day, in 1804, which was made a blessing to many that heard him. He then retired to the house of a relative in what was then a portion of Claibourne, but now Warren,

county, where he lingered until April 5th, 1804, and then entered into his eternal rest. For many years previous to his death he was a modest, but unwavering, professor of the blessing of entire sanctification. He loved to preach on the subject, and his experience and practice accorded with his profession and preaching. During his last illness he was a pattern of patience, gentleness, humility and constant devotion. He professed to be entirely delivered from the fear of death, and submissively wished for the hour when he might be permitted to "enter into the joy of the Lord." He was greatly beloved by the people of God, and was generally respected and reverenced by the people of the world. As he was the first representative of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Mississippi, and as he accomplished the object of his mission to the satisfaction of all parties interested, his name ought to live in the history of the Church to the end of time. He was buried in the vicinity where he died, and his grave may be seen about six miles from the city of Vicksburg, a little to the left of the road leading to Warrenton, where long-cherished affection has, within the last fifteen years, placed a suitable monument to perpetuate his name and character to unborn generations, unless it has been destroyed by the vandalism of the present war.

It is worthy of passing remark that Miss Griffing, the pious and pure-hearted maiden, to whom Mr. Gibson had been affianced, while on a visit to some relatives at a place then called St. Albans, on Big Black river, was taken sick and died in the Lord, not far from the time and place of his own death; so that their re-union in

the heavenly world was much sooner than they anticipated at their last painful parting.

The two Stewards, Randall Gibson and William Foster, whose names first appear in the old Steward's book referred to in the former part of this chapter, when the "whole Territory was one circuit," deserve to be had in remembrance by all who love what is good and noble in man. They both lived in the vicinity of Washington when Tobias Gibson first came as a missionary to the country, and they, with their wives, made four of the eight who joined the church the first time the missionary opened the door. Randall was a cousin of Tobias Gibson, and amidst the darkness of the times had been striving to be a Christian before the arrival of his illustrious kinsman. He had gone so far as to give in his experience in the newly-organized Baptist Church, and was waiting a convenient time to be immersed. But, after conversing freely with his newly-arrived cousin on doctrinal, experimental and practical Christianity, he found that he was more of a Methodist than a Baptist. He accordingly withdrew his application for membership in the Baptist Church, and united with seven others in forming the first Methodist Episcopal Church ever organized in the vast domain afterward embraced in the Mississippi Conference. Of the eight that joined at the first opening, Randall Gibson was the first to offer his hand to the minister; and this seemed to be ominous of his future course, for he was generally the first in "every good work." His intelligence and wealth, combined with his gentle manners and consistent piety, soon gave him prominence as a Methodist. He filled the offices of Steward and Class-leader with

great acceptability, and at an early day was licensed as a local preacher. In due time he graduated to Deacon's and Elder's orders, and for a long series of years was acknowledged as one of the most talented, faithful and useful local preachers in the Southwest. His person was thin and feeble, and his vocal organs not capable of much exertion without intervals of rest, so that he did not feel called to the itinerant work, and yet he did a good share of pioneering in all the region round about. He did a large amount of baptizing and funeral preaching wherever he lived, and often officiated at the hymenial altar for all classes of society. He removed from Washington to the northern part of Jefferson county, where he remained until about 1827 or 1828, when he moved to Warren county, where, in a few years more, he went down to his grave, full of years and honor. The writer of these sketches has cause of unspeakable gratitude to God that it was his privilege to sit under the ministry of Randall Gibson when he was classed with the seekers of salvation. "Why am I not pardoned and regenerated?" was the oft-repeated and anxious inquiry of his young heart in the latter part of 1821, after he thought he had given up all sin and had been an earnest seeker for forgiveness for some time. On a Sabbath he attended one of Randall Gibson's funeral discourses, in the Petit Gulf Hills, which was preached out of doors, because the audience was too large for the house. "A man may *know* himself to be a sinner without *feeling* himself to be such; but he must not only *know*, but *feel* himself to be a guilty and helpless sinner in order to true repentance," said the preacher. "That is me," responded my unforgiven heart. "I *know*, but,

alas! I do not *feel*." The preacher continued: "A man may believe all that the Scriptures say about the sufferings, death and intercession of Jesus Christ for sinners, but this will avail him nothing until he *feels* his personal need of a Savior, and believes in his heart that Jesus died for him, and that God accepts of him now for Christ's sake." "That is me!" again said the unbelieving heart of the writer. From that moment he made these matters a subject of constant and earnest prayer, and bright, heavenly light was daily poured in upon his dark and unbelieving heart, "showing sin to be exceeding sinful," until he indeed *felt* that he was a guilty and lost sinner, and his only hope was in the great atoning sacrifice and intercession of Christ Jesus, the only mediator between God and man. The grace of God abounded, and in a few weeks he was enabled to rejoice in a "knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins." Randall Gibson was a most excellent counselor and nurse for young Christians and young preachers. As characteristic of his pious care for younger brethren we may record one incident: A number of the official members from the lower end of the circuit had been in attendance at a quarterly meeting in the upper part of Claibourne county, and in making their way back called, in company with Mr. Gibson, to spend the night with Col. Burnett, at the Grindstone Ford, on Big Bayou Pierre. Soon after the usual salutations between the family and the officials had passed, Mr. Gibson proposed an evening walk to his company. A little above the Ford, in the edge of the woods, he paused and, after addressing a few appropriate words to the company, proposed that they should kneel together on the grass

and pray. He led in prayer, and such a prayer is seldom heard. He prayed appropriately for all; but there was in that kneeling group an unfledged youth who was feeling, "woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel," and yet often saying with a despondent heart, "I am not sufficient for these things." He was specially remembered by the importunate patriarch. O what unspeakable blessings did he invoke on the head and heart of that unpromising lad! How earnestly did he pray that he might yet become "a polished shaft in the quiver of the Almighty," and be instrumental in turning many to righteousness! That youth became a minister, and after the roll of long, weary years, was appointed Presiding Elder on the District embracing the Grindstone Ford, and often in his solitary rides past the place has he looked with tender emotions on the sacred spot where Randall Gibson offered up that special prayer for him, which was earnestly responded to by the other official members present. Not long before his death, when "in age and feebleness extreme," we heard him say to a camp-meeting audience, that "he no longer felt the obligation of preaching resting upon him—that burden had been entirely removed from his mind. He had nothing now to do but to wait in faith and patience for the call of his Master to go home." We can never forget that heavenly countenance and those joyful tears as he uttered these sentiments. His name is like the fragrance of the richest odors among the few yet remaining on earth who knew him best. Peace to his memory! We hope to meet him again.

The family of William Foster was in the vicinity of Natchez at an early period, for in one of the Indian

forays upon the Jersey settlement, previous to 1786, he had one of his arms badly shattered by a ball. The Indians had made an incursion into the settlement between Second Creek and Ellis' Cliffs on the Mississippi river, which being discovered, the men were called to arms to expel them. After a fruitless search they assembled at the house of one of the settlers for rest and refreshment, and not having the least apprehension that the Indians were dogging their retreat, carelessly laid aside their arms. The house being surrounded by high corn and other obstructions, the savages got near enough to make a deadly fire on the company before they were discovered. Such as were not killed or disabled by the first fire, grasped their guns in haste and fled to the adjoining woods. Mr. Foster, with a comrade, attempted to escape through a lane leading from the house, while the Indian rifles were popping on either side, and just as they passed out at the mouth of the lane a volley was fired at them and a ball shattered the forearm of Mr. Foster, which caused him to drop his rifle which he was carrying in that hand. His comrade was separated from him, and he continued his flight toward Second Creek. His arm bled freely, and he soon discovered that the Indians were trailing him by his blood. When he got to the creek he hastily selected a place concealed by logs and sunk himself in the water, leaving only his mouth and nose out for respiration. The Indians trailed him to the creek but his stratagem put them at fault, and after a hasty reconnoissance they gave up the chase. Mr. Foster remained under the water until after nightfall, which proved refreshing and effectually checked the flow of

blood from his wound. He then drew himself quietly out of his aqueous retreat, bound up his wound as best he could with his handkerchief, and sat down at the root of a tree, against which he supported himself until the break of day. At early dawn he began to hunt his way to the nearest settlement; but he could see no one to give him any information as to the probable whereabouts of the Indians or the amount of damage they had done in the neighborhood.

After awhile he came in sight of the house, but hesitated to approach, not knowing whether it was in the possession of friend or foe. He was, however, so exhausted from excitement, hunger, pain, and loss of blood, he did not hesitate long. On approaching he was overjoyed to find it inhabited by whites, and learn that the Indians had concluded their raid and fled from the settlement. He suffered long with his arm, until he was induced to visit an experienced physician on the coast, who, with his surgical tongs, extracted piece after piece of the fractured bone, until the wound was permanently healed, though it left him maimed for life. After this Mr. Foster married and settled on Pine Ridge, about six miles northeast of Natchez, where he probably resided at the time of his accession to the Church. He possessed a mature judgment, was industrious and economical, and soon became quite thrifty in his secular affairs. Mr. Foster was taciturn, and not much gifted in exhortation and extemporaneous prayer, but he had important and useful talents as a financier, and they were solemnly dedicated to God and the good of the Church. His financial skill, coupled with proverbial generosity, made him the best of Circuit Stewards. Many a travel-

worn itinerant not only found a pleasant home under his hospitable roof, where he could rest and recruit his exhausted strength, but also had his exhausted purse replenished with any amount necessary to meet his present wants. He was well trained in all his religious duties, and felt that he was a steward in the household of faith by Divine appointment; and his constant study seemed to be how much good he could do with the means entrusted to him for disbursement. Having no children of his own, he did much in the way of raising orphan relatives and successfully managing their estates. Perhaps but few among the living are apprised of the fact that the lot upon which the Methodist Church now stands in the city of Natchez was a donation from Mr. Foster for the purpose, but such was the case, as the records will show. In the latter part of Chapter VI we have already adverted to the fact that the first legal Conference held in Mississippi, and attended by a Bishop, was held in his private residence, where one room sufficed for the deliberations of the Conference and a sleeping apartment for all the preachers present.

The author can not close this brief sketch of one of the purest and best of men without acknowledging a characteristic act of generosity to himself, which occurred just before Mr. Foster's death, in 1834, and which was connected with the most dangerous crisis in his ministerial life, and has ever been viewed by him in the light of a special providence. At the close of his eighth year in the itinerant ministry, by having to break up housekeeping repeatedly, and move his family from one pastoral charge to another, where his superiors thought his services most needed—and, no doubt, in part from

his want of financial skill and experience—he had fallen behind with his creditors, which greatly oppressed his feelings, and rendered him almost incapable of doing "the work of an evangelist." In these trying circumstances he had well nigh made up his mind to locate and leave the itinerant pastoral work, to which he had felt and possessed a Divine call. When he was stationed on Washington circuit, in 1834, Mr. Foster, who belonged to his charge, incidentally became acquainted with his embarrassment, and, with characteristic liberality, made him a donation of five hundred dollars, which fully relieved him from debt and set him afloat again, so that if his services have been worth anything to the Church for the last thirty years, William Foster will certainly be entitled to a large share of the reward. Without that timely aid his itinerant career might not only have been suspended, perhaps for years, but finally closed. Mr. Foster did not feel called to preach himself, but he had a way of keeping others at it who did. Soon after this noble act of generosity to one of his suffering ministers, upon whom rested the "vows of God," he went down to his grave in a good old age, "like as a shock of corn cometh in season." The wives of these two excellent men, Randall Gibson and William Foster, survived their husbands a short period, and were justly esteemed as "mothers in Israel." Their end was peace, and their names are still "as ointment poured forth."

Miles Harper was admitted into the Western Conference about 1804, and, after itinerating there five or six years, mostly in the State of Tennessee, one of which he was Presiding Elder on the Cumberland District, in 1810, he came to Mississippi and traveled the Natchez

Circuit with William Houston. In 1813 he located at the informal Conference held at Newit Vick's, but his location seems not to have been confirmed by the Tennessee Conference, to which he belonged, until 1815. His name re-appears in the Tennessee Conference in 1818, and after spending one year in Nashville, he returned to Mississippi and was an active traveling preacher until the end of 1829, after which he was local until his death. But it is not so much the object of the writer to survey his fields of labor as to describe the various prominent points in his ministerial character. That Miles Harper was a truly converted man, and as truly called of God to preach the Gospel, there can be no reasonable doubt. In nearly all the years of his itinerancy, especially the first five or six, the fruits of his labors were abundant. He was by nature an orator, and he cultivated his oratorial talents with extraordinary success. There was an unusual degree of unction and power in his public prayers and sermons. He seemed to be well acquainted with the avenues to the human heart, and many were brought to feel exquisitely under his sermons. The place where he made the greatest impression was in addressing a camp meeting audience under favorable circumstances. For this his strong, clear, easy-flowing and musical voice was well adapted. We will give one example of the effects of his ministry on such occasions: In 1829 he preached on Sunday at the camp meeting at Springhill, in Jefferson county, Mississippi, at 10 or 11 o'clock A. M. His text was, "Return unto thy rest, O my soul." 1. He called our attention to the existence and attributes of the human soul. 2. That it was created to be holy and happy only

in union and communion with God. 3. That it had been separated from its rest by original and actual sin. 4. That provision had been made for its return, and it was now invited to return. 5. The happy consequences that will follow its return, and the disastrous consequences that will result from its not returning in due time to its intended rest. The whole discourse was deeply interesting, but under the fifth head he was surpassingly eloquent, especially in describing the eternal unrest of the lost soul. It could no longer claim the protection of God—could have no further interest in Christ—could never again have any part in the sanctifying grace of the Spirit—had forever lost all interest in the sympathies of both the Church militant and the Church triumphant; the very world upon which it had been accustomed to stand would ultimately be burned up; the heavens upon which it had been accustomed to gaze would pass away; the elements of the material heavens and earth would melt with fervent heat, and the doomed soul would be left to wander in hopeless despair amidst the blackness of darkness forever! About the middle of his discourse persons in various parts of the vast audience began to rise to their feet, one after another, until nearly the whole congregation was standing; then followed a gradual pressing inward, until, by the time he was done, most of his hearers were on their feet, and as near him as they could well get. This is a sample of the overpowering eloquence with which he sometimes preached, and the divine unction that attended his ministry.

But Miles Harper was not permitted to pass through life without some severe trials. He had some sharp

points in his character that irritated and offended certain classes, especially the cold hearted in the Church, and such as had no sympathy with religious excitement, and the obstinate and determined sinner without. Mr. Harper was inclined to be a rigid disciplinarian, and this displeased the habitually delinquent and refractory. In his sermons he often dealt with the short-comings of the Church membership and the popular vices of the country with an unsparing hand. In the *matter* of this there was nothing wrong—in the *manner* of doing it he may have been at times unnecessarily severe. But those who were not guilty themselves, nor wished to shield their families or friends in wrong doing, were seldom offended at his plainness of speech.

But there was a bitter cup for Mr. Harper to drink in his old age. In 1828 he was in charge of Washington, and the following year the country appointments were detached, and called Adams circuit, and he was continued in charge of that portion of his former work, while Benjamin M. Drake was in charge of Washington. The two charges contemplated a union camp-meeting, and a consultation was incidentally held in the Washington portion of the work, and arrangements were made for holding the camp-meeting at a time specified without consulting Mr. Harper on the subject. In this he allowed himself to think he was treated with intentional disrespect, and in an unguarded moment made some remarks which got into the gossip of the country, and, after passing through several editions, were construed into prevarication and falsehood. The excitement against Mr. Harper seemed to increase until the Conference met in Washington, in December, 1829,

when he was formally charged with the falsehood. It was, no doubt, prejudicial to his cause that the Conference met in Washington at that time, and that a number of the preachers boarded with those who were inimical to him, and were somewhat influenced against him before the case was investigated. The writer, who was present, does not yet see that the evidence was sufficient to depose an Elder in the Church, but such was the result. Those who admired and still had confidence in Mr. Harper felt unutterable grief at his expulsion, while those who were opposed to him looked upon it as a triumph. When he came into Conference next morning to receive his sentence, formally, he said "that his feelings of anguish were unutterable that morning when he assembled his weeping family around his domestic altar, with an assurance that he was beyond the pale of the visible Church. He still affirmed himself innocent of any intentional wrong, but said he did not blame the Conference—they had voted in view of the testimony—the blame was somewhere else." He alluded to the extreme view which the principal witness—upon whose testimony the whole matter mainly hinged—had taken of the unguarded remarks he had made about the appointment of the camp-meeting; and the Church delinquencies of that man afterward had a great tendency to restore Mr. Harper to the confidence of those who had voted against him at the time of his expulsion. He remained out of the Church about four years. He said he could not come back under the rule which requires "confession and contrition," as he was not conscious of any intentional wrong. While out of the Church he seemed to attend to all his pri-

vate and family religious duties as punctually as before. He also continued to preach in various places to many who were willing and anxious to hear him. Early in 1834 he was invited by the pastor and a number of the leading members of the Church in Natchez to unite with them without "confession and contrition," which invitation was accepted; and, as soon thereafter as it could be legally done, he was licensed to preach and restored to the office of an Elder. He was soon invited to occupy the various pulpits in his reach, and preached to the admiration of his old friends, though some modernized members of the Church seemed to have their minds made up not to like him.

Mr. Harper had a very interesting family. Mrs. Harper belonged to one of the most intelligent, pious and influential Methodist families in the Southwest. Their children were lovely and promising. But the extreme ground taken by the majority of the Conference against Mr. Harper had a tendency to alienate his family from the Methodist Episcopal Church and to throw them from under the influence of her ministers. This was a consequence to be both expected and regretted. It was natural for them to sympathize with—as they esteemed him—the deeply-wronged husband and father, but it was wrong in them to blame a whole denomination with what was done by a very few. Several of them, however, became worthy members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and it is devoutly hoped that this once happy family may yet all meet in heaven. Mr. Harper's old Tennessee co-laborers, who knew him while he belonged to the Great Western Conference, appreciated him highly to the last, and called to see him

in their occasional visits to the country. On his last visit to Mississippi Bishop McKendree spent several days at his house, to the great delight of himself and family.

After his return to the Church Mr. Harper often regretted that he was not employed in the regular pastoral work to which he had felt called of God in his youth, and in which he had spent the prime of his life. When he met with reverses in business, or suffered severe family affliction, he allowed himself to fear that they were Providential chastisements, because he was out of his legitimate calling.

When the writer was Presiding Elder on the Sharon District, about 1838, Mr. Harper was invited to come on a visit to Mrs. Harper's near relations in Madison county at a time when he could be with us at two of our camp-meetings. He accordingly came, though the distance was one hundred and fifty-miles from where he then resided. As he was now far away from the scene of his late trials, we determined not only to give him every opportunity to be useful, but to enjoy himself to the fullest extent in preaching. We accordingly called on him to preach at the most favorable hours, both in the day and night, and it was delightful to those who had heard him in manhood's prime to see how completely he had come up to his former standard of eloquence and powerful preaching. The two camp-meetings he attended were both in the immediate vicinity of the old Nashville and Natchez Trace, down which he traveled, through the Chickasaw and Choctaw tribes of Indians, in 1810, when he came as a missionary to Mississippi. On several occasions he touchingly

alluded to that lonely missionary trip through a natural and moral wilderness, in order to show what God had wrought for us in twenty eight years. On one occasion the eloquent old veteran seemed elated with the prospect of spending the evening of life happily engaged in his appropriate work. "I am now," said he, "fifty nine years old, and I feel that God is about to take the remnant of my days!" Soon after this he removed from Washington to Tensas parish, Louisiana, where, in a few years, he finished his earthly pilgrimage. When a friend asked him on his death-bed how he felt in view of death? his laconic answer was, "I feel peace!"

Miles Harper would not have been esteemed a great man in some respects—not as a philosopher, metaphysician, logician, or merely as a literary character—but he was great in eloquence and declamation, and the power with which he approached the human heart through the medium of the Gospel.

William Winans was born in the mountainous portion of Pennsylvania, November 3, 1788. His mother was left a widow, with a family of small children, in consequence of which most of his boyhood years were spent at hard labor in the iron founderies of his neighborhood in order to the support of the family. His associations not only exposed him to every common form of vice, in most of which he learned to participate, but his incessant labor in the founderies, as well as at home, deprived him almost entirely of even a rudimental education. His early youth was beclouded with sin, and he was fast drifting away from the morality taught in the Bible, when the pioneer Methodist preachers began to visit his neighborhood, and were

invited by his mother to lodge at, and hold religious services in, her house. He soon became awakened and joined the Church as a seeker of religion; but the family soon after removed to the State of Ohio, and in the excitement and labor of moving and settling a new place, he suffered himself to become cold and careless about the interests of his soul, so that he did not connect himself with the Church in Ohio for more than a year after his removal. He was about seventeen years old when he was re-awakened and brought to an affecting sense of his guilt and danger as a sinner against God, and after spending several months in penitence and earnest prayer, often feeling that his case was not only one of great difficulty, but almost utter hopelessness, he was enabled to lay hold on Christ Jesus by faith, and to feel that, through his merits and intercession, his sins were all forgiven and he was an adopted child of God. Soon after his conversion he became inwardly conscious of a Divine call to the work of the Christian ministry. Many were his misgivings and inward conflicts about entering upon the duties of this holy work, growing out of what he considered his total unfitness for it. He was without the prestige of education, personal or family influence, and, to his inexperienced mind, the idea of his becoming a competent and useful minister of the Gospel was wholly preposterous. But still there was a burden on his heart; the Word of the Lord "was as a burning fire shut up in his bones," and at every turn an inward voice in solemn tones whispered, "woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel." He yielded obedience to the heavenly call, and, after the usual preliminary steps were taken, he

was admitted as a licentiate into the Western Conference, where many good and great men were cradled. At this time—to use his own languge—"he was one of the most unfledged goslings that ever attempted the work of the Gospel ministry." But God is never mistaken in the implied talents of his chosen instruments to accomplish the work assigned them, if they will but be diligent in their calling. If men who profess to be called of God to preach the Gospel do not succeed, it is either because they are mistaken about their call, or shamefully neglect the improvement of their talents. Mr. Winans entered upon the duties of the ministry with that self-consuming zeal and diligence which characterised him through his long and eventful life. He at once became a diligent and successful student of every branch of literature and theology essential to the development of those extraordinary talents which made him so deservedly conspicuous in after life. After laboring two years in the Western Conference, he, with Sela Paine, volunteered to come as Missionaries to the Natchez Country in 1810, and made the journey through the "wilderness" on horseback in mid-winter. During the course of more than forty-five years in Mississippi he filled all the important offices in the itinerant ministry below that of Bishop, and in all probability would have filled that, had it not been for his connection with slavery by marriage, which deprived him, we think, very unjustly, of the vote of the Northern wing of the Church. It does not, however, accord with our plan to follow him through all the important positions he was called upon to occupy. We wish only to exhibit this deeply pious, talented, laborious and

eminently successful minister of the Gospel as we knew him to be. We do not intend that our admiration of, or reverence for, the man shall betray us into an exaggeration either of his goodness or greatness, or into an extenuation of the common infirmities of his humanity. In person he was somewhat over the ordinary size of men, and his frame was built more for strength and endurance than for symetry and beauty. His hair was light colored; complexion sandy; visage short; lips compressed; expression of countenance rather stern, and, apart from his lustrous brown eyes, not indicative of superior intelligence. From a front or rear view of his head, it seemed too small for the size of his body; but when viewed in profile it appeared of full size, and indicated a large brain. In his wearing apparel, both as to materials and form, he consulted his own comfort and ease more than he did any prevailing fashion or the tastes of others. He was plain and unostentatious in his manners, and conducted himself with the nicest propriety in all classes of society, and appeared as easy and graceful with the literati as with the peasantry of the country. Without any competent preceptor to select his books or prescribe his course of study, he read with great industry and rapidity such books as he could command that promised to be profitable to him in his profession. In this way he stored his mind with a heterogeneous mass of information, collected from all sorts of books suitable for a clergyman to read, but his gigantic mind was capable of reducing this chaos to harmony, so that when its parts reappeared in his sermons, they came forth in the most perfect order. He surpassed all men we ever knew in reading

the Bible and Biblical expositions. If our memory be not at fault, he read the entire Bible regularly through, without note or comment, eighty-seven times. In addition to this, he read Clarke and Benson's voluminous Commentaries through separately, and then re-read them unitedly. By the middle of life he had read the Bible so much that his mind instinctively turned away in quest of information from other books, and for awhile he discontinued his incessant Bible reading, and devoted his time to the reading and study of collateral books: but toward the close of life his taste for the naked text of the Bible was revived, and he read it more than ever, assigning as a reason that his memory had become defective, and unless he re-read it frequently he could not recollect and quote it as he desired. Mr. Winans' style of preaching was more argumentative than declamatory—more didactic than hortatory. He sometimes allowed himself to regret his want of suitable talents to arouse the sympathies of his auditors, and address himself successfully to the emotional part of their nature; and yet it was no uncommon occurrence to see many faces bathed in tears under his preaching. He acknowledged his inability to tell an illustrative anecdote successfully in the pulpit, and hence he seldom attempted it. In keeping with the example of the times, he acquired, early in his ministry, the practice of preaching too loud, and before he became fully aware of the evil of it, the habit had become so confirmed that it was a source of trouble and regret to him in all after life, as it so exhausted his strength that he did not preach with ease to himself, nor did he preach as often as he might otherwise have done. To this, in connection with his

long rides in the scattered population of a new country, we may attribute those seasons of protracted debility which so often disqualified him for the prosecution of his work.

Those who never heard him preach until the close of life, when his vocal organs had become comparatively weak, and his voice blunt and husky, can have but a faint idea of the shrillness, distinctness and vast extent of his voice when in his prime. He often regretted his inability to confine his exertions in the exercise of his voice within prudential limits. As soon as he became properly interested in his subject—whether preaching a sermon, making an address in behalf of some literary or charitable association, or making a speech in an Annual or General Conference—he elevated his voice to a high key, and spoke with an earnestness which showed that his whole soul was interested in his theme. Except the unnatural and painful exertions of his vocal organs in preaching, he was the most perfect model of extemporaneous preaching we have ever heard. When he arose in the pulpit there was seldom any reference made to himself, or any attendant circumstance not relevant to the subject of his intended discourse. His text was distinctly announced, and the first word, and every succeeding word and sentence, was preaching, and legitimate preaching, too, on the text selected. There was no wearisome introduction, nothing apparently deficient, nothing redundant, no wire-drawn arguments, no long-drawn peroration; you felt that he said just what was appropriate, and all that was appropriate, and no more. His ideas and arguments stood out before the mind like mountain scenery before the eyes;

all was tangible and prominent, so that some of his sermons heard more than forty years ago are yet apparently as fresh to the mind as though they had been heard but yesterday. Mr. Winans was always a very popular preacher in this country, and his popularity was based solely on his acknowledged goodness and greatness. There was nothing of the *ad captandum vulgus* either in his person or his ministry. His popularity was legitimate from his character and abilities; hence it was his well-deserved inheritance to the close of life. Especially in the last half of his ministerial life his popularity was unsurpassed. Wherever it was known that he was to preach, whether on week day or Sabbath, in city or country, at an Annual or General Conference, he was sure of an unsually large audience; and to his greatest and most intelligent congregations he generally preached his plainest and most pointed and heart-searching sermons, on doctrinal, experimental and practical Christianity. Self was ignored, and he seemed only anxious to use the occasion for the spiritual benefit of his hearers. He no doubt felt, as the infirmities of old age multiplied upon him, that he was preaching his last series of sermons, and they excelled in gospel simplicity and holy unction. As a debater, we have seldom, if ever, met the equal of Mr. Winans, either in an Annual or General Conference. He was seldom the first to take part in a debate on either side, but would wait until the mooted question was properly defined, and the substance of the arguments, pro and con, adduced, and then, with characteristic self-possession and deliberation, he would enter upon, prosecute and perfect his argument in a way to insure as much

success to his side of the question as any other man could justly claim. Mr. Winans was also a well-practiced and voluminous writer. In addition to keeping a copious journal of the incidents of his personal history, and observations on men and passing events, an extensive correspondence with numerous friends far and near, with criticisms on many of the authors he read—especially Doctor Adam Clarke's Commentaries—he wrote and published a volume of most excellent and well arranged "Discourses on fundamental religious subjects," and left a sufficient number in manuscript for another volume. It is the opinion of the writer of this sketch of this truly great and good man that his published "series of discourses" ought to be adopted as one of the class-books of the under-graduates of all the Annual Conferences. They would be immensely more serviceable to them than some works now in the "course of study." Being the head of a family, and, by birthright, a citizen of the country, and feeling that his all of temporal good, as well as that of his family and posterity, was intimately connected with, and dependent on, the stability and success of his government, it was very natural for a man of his intellectual superiority, vast range of thought and extensive reading, to notice with deep interest the political history of his country, and to express in private circles his preference for such measures as he thought most conducive to his country's welfare. As he had never, in any of his Christian or ministerial vows, relinquished any of his civil rights as a citizen of the country, he claimed it as an inalienable privilege not only to have his political creed, but on proper occasions,

in private circles, to express his political preferences. This sometimes, very innocently on his part, occasioned considerable sparring among the party editors and politicians of the day. Those whose opinions were coincident with his often strove to parade the prestige of his great name in favor of their cause, while those on the opposite side were so jealous of his influence as to indulge in unmanly vituperation against him. But none of these things moved him from his straight-forward, manly and independent course. If he was somewhat conspicuous in politics, it was because others made him so, not himself. When his physical nature was fairly worn-out by hard labor and the advancement of old age, he asked to be excused from the regular pastoral work, assigning as a reason, that he could not be responsible for work without overleaping the bounds of prudence, and exhausting, prematurely, what little strength he had left. He was accordingly placed on the superannuated list, in which relation he spent the last seven years of his life. Partial rest from the active duties of the ministry, in connection with his regular home habits, secured to him as much health and bodily comfort as he could promise himself at his time of life. The evening of his long and laborious life was industriously employed in attending to whatever he considered his duty to God, his family, or his fellow-man. It was during his superannuation that he prepared his unsurpassed "discourses on fundamental religious subjects" already alluded to. It was a principle with him that all the physical and intellectual strength imparted to us by our Heavenly Father ought to be employed in the most useful way to the end of life.

The disease which finally terminated his useful life was an acute inflammation of the kidneys, one of which seemed to be wholly destroyed. This disease gave him long weeks of the most intense suffering. It was deeply affecting to see the venerable man, after having spent more than fifty years in the service of God, passing through such a terrible ordeal just as he was closing his earthly pilgrimage; but such was the will of God, and we know it was for the best. After the process of suppuration was completed, and the inflammatory stage of the disease had passed, he had comparative ease until life was closed, on the 31st of August, 1857. He had but little rapturous joy during his excruciating affliction, but in undoubting faith he committed his spiritual interests and eternal salvation into the hands of his great Redeemer, with an assurance that all would be well with him when the will of God should be accomplished.

Mr. Winans was a true Wesleyan on the doctrine of Christian perfection, believing Mr. Wesley's views to be thoroughly scriptural; and while his own experience on that point was not always satisfactory to himself, he was, nevertheless, an unwavering advocate of the doctrine. On this important doctrinal point he said, "Let God be true, though every man be found a liar. What though the experience of the majority of Christians—or even of all Christians—should fall below the Bible standard, does this impeach the word of God, and make it of none effect? God forbid!" Just as he was entering into his last illness, he heard one of his juniors in the ministry preach on being "filled with all the fullness of God." His soul kindled with rapture at the

prospect, and, in the class-meeting which followed, he expressed his renewed determination to press forward after "all the fullness of God."

Never again will the members of the Mississippi Conference feel their orphanage as they did when the death of William Winans was announced. For forty-six years he had fully preached the Gospel among them, and had been their file-leader in every plan for the spread of scriptural holiness over the land; and when they heard that they would see his face no more in the flesh, they mourned and wept as for a father dead. It may be well for the writer, before he closes this sketch, to state an additional fact in the history of Mr. Winans, which is now known to very few. Between 1820 and 1828 the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States was fearfully convulsed by what was known as the "Radical movement," which consisted mainly in an effort to introduce a lay and local delegation into her Annual and General Conferences, and which resulted in the formation of the Protestant Methodist Church. The far-seeing and discriminating mind of Mr. Winans soon detected the inutility and sophistry of the proposed radical change in the frame work of our Church government, and took special care to guard the people of his charge against the wide-spreading delusion. In his Quarterly Conferences, after all the regular business had been attended to, he would arise and, in a short but clear and convincing address to the official members, show the sophistry and evil consequences of the "Radical movement." The result was that it never obtained any organized foothold in the extensive district over which he presided; nor has it to this day.

The maiden name of Mrs. Winans was Martha Du Bose. She was a lady of great worth, on account of her mental endowments, earnest and consistent piety, and sincere devotion to the interests of the Church. She was every way worthy and well qualified to be the life-long companion of her truly great and good husband. She survived him but a few years, and then was placed by his side to await with him "the resurrection of the just."

CHAPTER VIII.

Moses Floyd and His Family—Mr. Floyd Temporarily Suspended from the Ministry—Becomes a Local Preacher and Physician—Removes to St. Albans—To Northern Louisiana—Returns to Natchez, where he dies—Afflicting Vicissitudes of His Family—His Oldest Daughter—Unhappy Fate of His Oldest Son—Account of His Other Children—Rev. John Shock, one of the Early Missionaries to Mississippi—Commences the Ministry in the South Carolina Conference—Tries to be a *Big Preacher* too soon, and meets with a Terrible Defeat—His Labors on the Tombeckbee—On Red River, in Louisiana—Rude State of Society There—Threatened by a Mob in Alexandria—Escapes by His Boldness—Marries and Locates—Troubles of His After Life.

In the order of time the sketch of Moses Floyd ought to have preceded those of Miles Harper and William Winans, as he came to the country six or eight years before they did, but we desire to say something about his family that may be suggestive and instructing, and have concluded to write all we intend to say about him and his family in the same connection. As we stated in a preceding chapter, in the latter part of 1802 Tobias Gibson appeared before the Western Conference to solicit ministerial aid for the Natchez Country, whereupon Bishop Asbury called for a volunteer to go to that distant and toilsome missionary field, and was responded to by Moses Floyd. Our recollection is, that Mr. Floyd was a Georgian, but of his history up to 1800, at which time he was admitted as a traveling preacher into the South Carolina Conference, we know nothing. As an evidence of his promise in the itinerancy, he was appointed his first year in charge of a Circuit called Richmond, with Moses Black as his colleague. In 1801 he traveled a Circuit apparently in North Carolina, called Swanino, and in 1802 one called Green, in the Holston country, within the

bounds of the Western Conference. But it is extremely difficult, and in many instances impossible, to locate the Circuits of those days from the names by which they are called in the printed minutes. It is a misfortune to posterity that so many of them were named after obscure creeks, mountain gorges, or something else not to be found on the maps of the country. Wherever it can be done with propriety, all of our pastoral charges should have a geographical name that can be readily found on an ordinary map. This would give them "a local habitation" as well as a name. As Mr. Gibson was in feeble health, Mr. Floyd was appointed in charge of the Natchez Circuit, with the understanding that Mr. Gibson was to assist him as much as his health and strength would permit. Mr. Floyd traveled two years in Mississippi with considerable success, but his race here as a traveling preacher was short, and his after life was strongly marked with care, and toil, and disappointment. He had not been long in the country before he made a matrimonial engagement with Miss Hannah Griffing, daughter of John Griffing, Esq., and on the maternal side a descendant of Rev. Samuel Swayze, heretofore mentioned as the first Protestant minister in the country. Miss Griffing is represented as having been beautiful in person when young, deeply pious, and every way worthy and well qualified to be the wife of a minister. But Mr. Floyd had fallen into bad health, was poor, and engaged in a calling which promised but little of worldly wealth, all of which considerations occasioned her father to take a firm stand against the consummation of the engagement; and, as matters turned out

afterward, he was not to be censured for his parental feeling and forethought for the comfort and support of a favorite daughter. The young people, however, were not to be thwarted, and, as Miss Griffing had attained the age of majority, they concluded to meet at the house of a friend and have their union completed. "Honor thy father and mother, that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on earth," which is the first commandment with promise. Did Miss Griffing dishonor her parents by treating their advice with disrespect and violating their wishes in this matter? Was this step the precursor of her life of poverty and affliction? The author will not venture an answer to these questions. That the young minister and his affianced were devotedly attached to each other there was sufficient evidence, and that they lived together ever after "in perfect love and peace" there was no doubt. No one out of the immediate family attached much blame to Mr. Floyd for getting married under the circumstances, but those in authority in the Church thought that the supremacy of the disciplinary law which interdicts the marriage of "a Methodist preacher" to a woman without the consent of her parents ought to be maintained, and accordingly suspended him from the exercise of his ministerial functions for a short time. He was, however, soon restored, and such was his prudence and gentlemanly and Christian bearing, that he retained the confidence and affections of the people generally.

Mr. Floyd's educational advantages were above mediocrity, but whether he had studied medicine before he entered the ministry or afterward we are not informed.

He, however, entered upon its practice soon after his location, and thenceforward was known as Dr. Floyd. He settled for a short time at St. Albans, on Big Black, in Claibourne county, but in a short time removed, with several families of the Griffings, and settled in Prairie Jefferson, in what is now Morehouse parish, Louisiana. He remained there a number of years, cultivating a little farm, practicing medicine, and preaching as a local preacher. He was generally esteemed by the people in all his relations to them, but everything seemed to operate against his success in life. His constitution was feeble, the population of the few settlements in reach was sparse and poor, so that he realized but little from his profession; the country was new and very remote from commercial advantages, so that he found it impossible to keep up with the current expenses of a rapidly increasing family. Finally, the various interdicts laid on commerce during the war with England so deranged all the finances of the country, especially in those remote settlements in Northern Louisiana, that Dr. Floyd and several other families determined to return to Mississippi. He was not able to sell what little property he had acquired, in the way of land and stock, but had to leave it in the care of a relative. Soon after Dr. Floyd left the country a judgment was obtained against him for a small debt, and his property was attached and sold. It was bid in by the relative in whose care he left it, for the purpose of restoring it to him as soon as the debt was finally discharged; but this relative died before the property was legally transferred back to the heirs of Dr. Floyd, in consequence of which it was alienated from the family, and untimately

became the source of a vexatious law-suit, with but little advantage to the heirs. Dr. Floyd, on his return to Mississippi, engaged in teaching school and practicing his profession, first on Pine Ridge and afterward in the city of Natchez, where, in 1814, he died from the effects of measles, leaving a wife and five children in a state of dependence on others for the necessaries of life. He was buried on the hill in the old city burying ground, now just in the rear of the cathedral, but his grave was not marked, and the most diligent search twenty years afterward was not successful in identifying it. Dr. Floyd maintained his respectability as a consistent Christian and minister of the Gospel to the end of life, and his death was much regretted, especially by the infant Church in Natchez. Our personal recollection of him is that he was very mild and affable in his intercourse with society, and his style of preaching was more doctrinal than pathetic. The history of no Methodist minister's family has made such an impression on our mind as that of Moses Floyd's. It is a fearful thing to fail in carrying out, or to turn away from our providential calling in life. Mr. Floyd had admitted his call to preach, and in his ordination vows he had been fully consecrated to the Gospel ministry; and had he devoted all his time and strength to this one glorious work to the end of life, could he have fared worse in temporalities, been less successful in his finances, or died poorer than he did?

We should humbly and faithfully do the work assigned us by Infinite Wisdom according as He gives strength and opportunity; and after using that industry and economy in temporal affairs which is consistent

with our holy calling as ministers of the Gospel, we should commit our destiny and that of our families into the hands of God, with an assurance that all will end well, if we be still found in the path of duty. Mrs. Floyd was the author's aunt, which gave him an opportunity of knowing the history of the family in all its details. But we presume it would be neither interesting or profitable to our readers to rehearse the ever-changing fortunes of her widowhood for thirty years after the death of her husband. From that sad event she was indeed "a stranger and pilgrim on earth," and had "no certain dwelling place." She lived sometime in Natchez, awhile in the vicinity of her father's, near Selsertown, then in various outhouses and vacant tenements in Jefferson county, near her three married sisters, neither of whom were in circumstances at that time to do more than supply her and her helpless children with shelter, food and raiment, and to assist in the education of her children. At a later period she returned for a short time to her former residence in the Prairie Jefferson, in Louisiana, and afterward lived awhile with her son-in-law, William Bolls, of Hemstead county, Arkansas. Finally, after all her children had grown up and left her, she found a home of peace and plenty in the family of her brother, Rev. James Griffing, of Claibourne county, Mississippi, where, in a good old age, she closed her life of poverty and suffering in Christian confidence. Through a long life of dependence and perpetual change, Mrs. Floyd maintained her Christian integrity and her position as a talented, influential and useful member of the Church. Like most of the members of her father's family, she

was gifted in public prayer, and had a voice so sweet and pathetic that it melted into the soul like the most inspiring strains of sacred music. "By the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better," is the language of inspiration, and the sanctified afflictions of this good woman imparted to her that tenderness of heart which qualified her to weep with all who wept, and to rejoice with all who rejoiced in the Lord. She was a safe and successful counselor for penitent seekers of salvation and young Christians generally. No one had more to do in leading the writer to a correct knowledge of the doctrines and discipline of the Church, and confirming him in the assurance of his interest in Christ, and urging him on in the "way of holiness," than Mrs. Floyd. This she did, not only by her sanctified conversation, but by selecting and loaning him books suited to his grade of knowledge and Christian experience. She was instrumental in relieving him from the most perplexing and distressing doubts as to the genuineness and evangelical character of his conversion, and of leading him fully into the glorious light and liberty of the sons of God. She was, theoretically and experimentally, well posted on the doctrine of entire sanctification, and for more than twenty years before her death was an humble and modest professor of that state of grace. She seldom did more in the social meetings of the Church than to make a short reference to this part of her Christian experience, but in private circles, where she found earnest Christians anxious to know the way by which the Lord had led her on, she would tell of the time and place where she lay prostrate under "power from on high," while she

felt the Holy Ghost pervading her whole being, and diffusing throughout her spirit, soul and body the spirit of holiness and perfect love. While she was literally poor in earthly substance, she was rich in grace, and held her title to "an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven" for her.

Notwithstanding our high appreciation of her Christian character, we have long believed that there was a radical defect, or rather indiscretion, in her family government. One of her five children died soon after her husband, leaving the remaining four—the oldest and youngest being daughters—as her entire family. It was very natural for her to dote on her children, and to place a high estimate on their gradually-maturing physical and mental developments. She gave way to the motherly feeling that they were above the common grade in the way of original smartness, and incautiously got into the habit of relating to visitors, in their presence, all their pert sayings and doings. This indiscretion of a fond mother never seemed to have any bad effect on the oldest daughter, but it evidently led her other children "to think more highly of themselves than they ought," so that by the time they were fifteen they were too self-confident; and believing they had got quite in advance of their mother, threw off their allegiance to her to a great extent, so that the bitterest ingredient in her full cup of sorrow was the way her sons turned out in after life. Salina Eunice, the oldest daughter, was one of the most exemplary girls we ever knew, being remarkable for her docility and gentleness of spirit. While growing up she was often, for long

periods, an inmate of our mother's family, and such was her faultless deportment that we were accustomed to look on her as one of the most pure and innocent of human beings. We were greatly surprised when she was about sixteen years old to witness her flowing tears and deep sorrow for sin, as she knelt at the altar of penitence and prayer, and to hear her incessant and bitter cry of "God be merciful to me, a sinner." Up to that date we were in our native darkness of sin and unbelief, and it had never occurred to our mind that one apparently so innocent could be esteemed a sinner, polluted and guilty before God. But the light of the Holy Spirit had revealed to her the impurity of her unrenewed heart, and led her to feel that sin, in all its forms and degrees, is "exceeding sinful," which made her cry mightily to God, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for sinners, to deliver her forever from its guilt and power. The hour of her deliverance soon came, and she was numbered among the happy young converts. It was witnessing the scenes of penitence through which she passed just before her happy conversion that was made, under the blessing of God, the means of our awakening, and of starting out on a course of piety, which, thanks to Divine grace, we have been enabled to keep for near forty-four years. Soon after her conversion she was led to see that there was a higher state of grace for her to enjoy, and she became more and more interested in studying the scriptural theory of entire sanctification, and seeking an experimental knowledge of "the great salvation." After being brought to see what roots of bitterness yet remained in a heart not "cleansed from all unrighteousness," and

not yet wholly consecrated to God, and after an earnest struggle of several weeks' continuance, as she knelt one day in private prayer, these words of the Savior were powerfully applied to her heart: "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you." With this came the evidence that "the blood of Christ had cleansed her from all sin," and that she was now wholly consecrated to God. Like her mother, she was modest in professing this state of grace, but it was delightful, as well as instructing and encouraging, to hear her, in her private intercourse with earnest Christians, tell every item of her experience on this point. She afterward married William Bolls, a widower, and considerably her senior in years, but an excellent Christian. Some years after their marriage they moved to Hempstead county, Arkansas, where Mr. Bolls died. The family met with pecuniary reverses in Arkansas, which left her poor after her husband's death, but with her face still heavenward. Whether she is yet alive, in 1865, or what have been her joys and sorrows for the last twelve or fifteen years, the writer has not the means of knowing. If she is yet alive, it would afford him the greatest pleasure to meet her again on earth, and compare notes at the end of our forty-fourth year of Christian pilgrimage. We were members of the same class in our youth, and many were the profitable and happy hours we spent together conversing on spiritual subjects, and relating to each other the merciful dealings of God with our souls.

The youngest daughter of Mrs. Floyd, Lucinda Vernera, grew up to womanhood, and during her mother's last residence in Prairie Jefferson married a man by

the name of Williams, and died a few years after. She was not so much inclined to early and earnest piety as her older sister, nor had she exhibited such evidences of sound conversion; yet we indulge the hope, from what was manifested in her experience and practice, that this child of prayer was saved.

Chislieu Loammi, the oldest son, was a wayward youth, and by the middle of life came to a tragical end by his own hands. He was decidedly irreligious, and in his youth became infatuated with the idea that there was a fortune for him somewhere in the world which he could gain without work; and, in view of this, he engaged in sundry wild speculations, some of them not at all creditable to himself, and deeply mortifying to his relatives. There was a vein of hereditary insanity in a branch of his family, which had manifested itself in several instances in preceding generations, and this may have been, to some extent, the cause of his erratic course in life: for about the time he was fully grown he became deranged, and wandered about the country for a considerable time. In his derangement he was wicked, but generally harmless in his intercourse with others. It gradually wore off, after which he engaged in blacksmithing in Natchez, and, so far as we know, had the reputation of being industrious and honorable, though he kept at a great distance from religion. If he came to Church at all it was to sit in the gallery, or elsewhere remote from the pulpit, as though he were only an idle spectator. Whether he became addicted to drinking or had a return of insanity the writer does not know; but about 1840 he became despondent in regard to all his earthly prospects, and deliberately contrived to blow

out his brains in his bed-room. This occurred somewhere in the vicinity of Natchez, where he was temporarily in charge of the plantation of some absentee. He had no family, and had lived to but little profit to himself or others, and died without hope: a sad end for a child of prayer, and a son of the second Methodist missionary to Mississippi!

Adville Asbury, the second son, never married; and though we do not know that he ever became outwardly vicious, he kept away from the Church, and became a sort of wild man of the woods on Bœuff river, in Louisiana, where he spent the last years of his life as a hunter and land-jobber. It seemed to have become a matter of indifference with him whether he lodged in or out of a house, whether he traveled a road or coursed it through the woods, or whether he could ford or had to swim the streams in his way. Not long before his death he made a short visit to the neighborhood in Jefferson county, Mississippi, where he had spent his boyhood, and at one of our meetings came forward as a penitent for an interest in the prayers of the Church; and many and fervent were the prayers offered that day for the salvation of the son of our second missionary to this country. He gave no evidence of conversion, however, and whether he continued to seek the Lord after he left us we are not informed. He returned to his wilderness home on Bœuff river, where he soon afterward died.

The history of this family, temporally and spiritually, has been one of both sad and profitable remembrance to the writer. We may learn important and useful lessons by briefly tracing the history of some of the families of the early Methodist preachers of Mississippi and Louisi-

ana. While we shall find much that is worthy of our admiration and imitation, we shall find some things to regret and mourn over. We have seen enough to satisfy us that not only the children of pious laymen, but the children of pious and zealous ministers of the Gospel may live without godliness and die without hope. The piety and prayers of their parents do not destroy their free-agency, and by its abuse they are capable of working out their own damnation. But in continuing these sketches we will not find fault with our predecessors merely for the sake of vanity, nor to gratify a fault-finding disposition. Our object shall be, if possible, to trace disastrous effects back to their producing causes, that we may see the origin of the evils referred to in order to avoid them.

It is not our intention to write biographical notices of all the Methodist ministers who were abundant in labors here in early times, because this, in many instances, has been done already by abler pens than ours. In the printed minutes we have short, but very readable, memoirs of Lauer Blackman, Samuel Parker, Lewis Hobbs and others, and in the volume of "Biographical Sketches of Itinerant Ministers," published at the Southern Methodist Publishing House, in Nashville, Tennessee, we have a life-like sketch of Rev. John Lane, one of our most eminent early Mississippi preachers, by Rev. B. M. Drake, D. D., and of Richmond Nolley, by H. N. McTyeire, D. D. We would recommend all who have any love for the holy and beautiful, as exemplified in the lives of good men, to procure that volume and enjoy a rich, intellectual and spiritual feast in its perusal. It is rather our purpose to take up such cases as

may soon be lost to the Church unless committed to writing speedily, and such cases as may not only amuse and instruct, but solemnly warn us, as their successors in the ministry, of the dangers to which we are exposed and the rocks upon which we may be wrecked. We will now briefly touch the prominent points in the ministerial life of John Shrock. He was originally admitted into the South Carolina Conference, and after traveling Lincoln Circuit, in 1811, as the junior of Robert Porter, and Rocky River, in 1812, as the junior of John Hill, he, with John L. E. Byrd, was transferred to the Mississippi District of the Tennessee Conference, where he traveled Tombeckbee Circuit, in 1813, as the colleague of Richmond Nolley, and in 1814 Rapide Circuit, in Louisiana, after which he located and remained in that relation to the close of life. In the life of this minister, who was, no doubt, a chosen vessel of the Lord, we find much to admire and much to regret; and by a review of his whole career as a minister we may learn lessons of instruction and solemn warning. He was of German extraction, and a native of South Carolina. When a youth he attended a camp-meeting, where he was brought to see and feel himself a guilty and lost sinner, without an interest in Christ, and where, after a season of deep penitence, he was brought to rejoice "in a knowledge of salvation by the remission of his sins." His conversion was sudden and clear, and he gave vent to the raptures of his new-born soul in loud shouts of praise to God, and in earnest exhortations to all around to "taste and see that the Lord is good." The Church soon saw that he had a talent for usefulness, and called on him frequently to

exercise his gifts in prayer and exhortation. Being a "striker" in a blacksmith shop, and his literary attainments being very limited, with but few opportunities for improvement—while he daily felt a burning, consuming desire to be instrumental in saving souls—he could not, for some time, admit his designation to the Christian ministry.

His brethren, however, believed him called of God to preach the Gospel, and obtained his consent to be recommended to the Annual Conference, where he was admitted and appointed to a circuit. He went to his work with the most humble views of his capacity for usefulness, and believing, unless he was "endued with power from on high," he could not fulfill the purposes of his holy calling, he spent much of his time on his knees, reading his Bible, and praying for the Spirit to "guide him into all truth," and enable him so to preach the Gospel that he might both save himself and them that heard him. He carefully noted all his duties as laid down in the Discipline, and endeavored to discharge them all as time and opportunity offered. This, in connection with his warm-hearted prayers, exhortations and songs, gave him favor in the eyes of the people, and he was rapidly rising in popularity and usefulness when, in an evil hour, he gave way to pride and self-confidence, and met with a very humiliating but profitable overthrow. How certain it is that "pride goeth before a fall," and that "he that exalteth himself shall be abased!" Hitherto Mr. Schrock had cultivated a spirit of unfeigned humility and a constant sense of his dependence on the Holy Spirit for strength to discharge the duties of his holy office. He did not believe that he was yet a preacher,

and doubted whether he ever would be one in the proper sense of the term; but he was happy in his efforts to do good, and felt encouraged to go on. At one of his Saturday appointments he had a congregation of good size, and felt the Spirit with him in all his exercises. By arrangement, he went home, after service, with an elderly class-leader, who was to accompany him next day to his appointment, where he anticipated a congregation of several hundred hearers. As soon as he entered the house of his host he retired to the "preacher's room," and betook himself to his studies. After a little he overheard the wife of the class-leader ask her husband if he "noticed that Brother S hrock preached from the same text that Brother Porter did at his last appointment?" which question he answered affirmatively. "There," said S hrock to himself, "I have ruined myself in the estimation of that congregation, for now they see the great disparity between my bungling efforts to preach and the superior style and arrangement of Brother Porter. I wish I had taken another text." After a short pause the good sister continued: "And, according to my judgment, he preached a better sermon than Brother Porter. "Ah, my sister," soliloquized Mr. S hrock, "I know you are mistaken; you are no judge of what constitutes good preaching." "Yes," responded the old gentleman, "that is my deliberate opinion; he preached a better sermon on that text than Brother Porter did." Just there, Mr. S hrock said, Satan began to gain an entrance to stir up the remains of pride in his heart, and, to use his own expression, "he began to s[illegible]ell like a toad getting ready to run over an ox." Said he to himself, complacently, "that old class-

leader has read all of Wesley's sermons and many others—he has often heard the Pierces, James Russell, Hope Hull, and most of our leading ministers preach—so that he is a judge of preaching, and if he says I outpreached Brother Porter, it must be so, and no mistake." Just there it occurred to his mind how much better he could do next day with a little extra preparation beforehand. Full of the idea of preaching "a tremendous sermon" to his large Sabbath congregation, he went to work, selected his text and planned his discourse, and by eleven o'clock next day had grown up to mature manhood as a preacher, in his own estimation. Entering the pulpit clothed with self-confidence, instead of being "filled with the Spirit," he went through the preliminary exercises without embarrassment, announced his text, and called the attention of his auditors to five general propositions which he was going to elaborate. But just at that point the curtain fell, and a horror of great darkness came upon him. He tried to recall the first, second and third heads of his intended sermon, but they were utterly gone, and fourthly and fifthly immediately followed them. In his embarrassment he rubbed his brow—then thought he would deliberately read over his text, and that would probably recall his fugitive sermon; but, alas! the location of the text on the sacred page could not be found, nor could it be repeated from memory. His discomfiture was now complete, and, precipitately leaving the pulpit, he said to the class-leader as he passed out: "If you can do anything for this people do it, for I can not." His first impulse was to mount his horse, and, as soon as he could get out of sight, to leave the road and hide himself far away in the forest, where

he could spend the afternoon in weeping penitence for having been "lifted up with pride, and falling into the condemnation of the devil," and where he might pour out his heart in prayer to God to forgive his folly. As he rode off he felt that all eyes were upon him, and the time seemed long before he could feel that he was out of sight and alone with God. Securing his horse, he threw himself upon the ground and wept and prayed until he felt that God, for Christ's sake, "forgave the iniquity of his sin." He soon re-appeared among his people greatly benefitted by this severe but necessary discipline, feeling the import of the solemn words of the Savior as he had never felt them before, "without me ye can do nothing." He was now content, "with all humility of mind," to preach, not himself, "but Christ Jesus the Lord." He said, when the agony of that day was over and he felt fully restored to the Divine favor, that often when he entered the house of God he felt more like hiding himself under the pulpit than ascending it in order to preach. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted," is the decree of God. This was soon verified in the case of our young preacher; for while he sunk low in his own estimation, his confidence in the promise of Him who had said, "Lo! I am with you alway," was greatly increased. He became quite a revivalist, and in some places was favored with extraordinary success for a man of his talents. Mr. Shrock was very impulsive, and, following the lead of a consuming zeal not well tempered with prudence, he soon prostrated his fine German constitution, and so impaired his vocal organs by "preaching too long and too loud," that his once sonorous voice was a wreck for the balance of his life. His

mind, though not very accurately balanced, was strong and active, and susceptible of vast improvement; and, with proper care and culture, his constitution, voice and intellect might have been sound at the end of three-score years. What a pity that all this promise of long years of usefulness to the Church was blighted by his excessive labors within the first five years of his ministry! In 1813, when Mr. S hrock was on the Tombeckbee circuit, in the Alabama part of the Mississippi district, the Creek Indian war was raging, and the people generally lived in forts. The massacre of Fort Mims, and occasional skirmishes with the Indians, kept up a constant state of alarm; but, notwithstanding this, the two itinerants, Nolley and S hrock, went from fort to fort, filling their appointments with praiseworthy regularity, and preaching in "demonstration of the Spirit and power."

Perhaps the meek-spirited Nolley would have thought it quite out of character for a minister to fight with carnal weapons, but his impulsive colleague thought differently. Once, when they were momentarily expecting an attack from the lurking savages, he requested the commandant to supply him with a gun and assign him a port-hole and he would show them that he could fight as well as preach. Fortunately, however, the attack was not made, and he missed an opportunity to exhibit his military prowess; but the writer has no doubt that he would have fought with great bravery had the chance offered. In 1814 Mr. Shrock was on Rapide Circuit, in Western Louisiana, where he was indefatigable in his labors, and did a good deal of his characteristic preaching, which was often more a ministry of reproof than of consolation. The state of society at

that time in the Red River Valley and adjacent country was rude and vicious, and very few reliable Church members were to be found in all that region. The preachers were not only subjected to the most trying hardships in the way of long rides, ferryless and bridgeless streams, bottomless mud, and bad accommodations generally, but they were constantly exposed to the insults of rude and wicked men. It was somewhere in that region that Drury Powell, one of the pioneer preachers, was beset by a company of lewd fellows, who gave evidence of an intention to mob him, but who quailed and skulked away when Powell presented a bold front, and said to them that "if they were indeed a set of ruffians, and would give him a ruffian's chance by attacking him one at a time, he would whip the whole of them." It was, we think, at St. Martinsville, that a company of the "baser sort" took Richmond Nolley—the most unresisting of men—while he was preaching, and were going to duck him in the bayou, when a stout negress suddenly attacked them with her hoe and rescued the preacher. John Shrock was duly apprised of this phase of Louisiana society, and, so far from conciliating this class of men by passing their sins unreproved, he seemed rather to court a conflict with them by denouncing their vices, showing their degrading effects, and referring them to their final doom. The year did not close before he had his courage tested at Alexandria. He was preaching there in the Court House one Sabbath, when a company of outsiders came about the windows and, by various gesticulations and grimaces, tried to disturb him in his discourse. He looked them full in the face and told

them, "if they did not repent of their evil ways they would catch something hotter than boiling soap one of these days;" and as the allusion to the boiling soap was the gist of the offense, it needs some explanation. There lived in the suburbs of Alexandria, in a small house, a woman with two grown daughters, all of very doubtful reputation. One night a company of mischievous fellows beset the house in order to tease the inmates for the sake of a little fun. The woman was boiling soap, and there being a convenient hole in the back of the chimney, through which the assailants occasionally peeped in at the infuriated inmates, she threatened to throw a gourd full of soap into the face of the next one that did it. Soon after one who had not heard the threat came along, and hearing the confused and boisterous jawing of those within against those without, he thrust his face to the hole for a peep within, when he was met, to his great discomfort, as well as the temporary marring of his visage, by a gourd of boiling soap. The allusion of Mr. Shrock to this in a congregation where the affair had been known and laughed over for some time so enraged these disturbers of public worship that they formed themselves into a company of about twenty, and swore lustily that they would duck him in Red river if he ever attempted to preach there again.

Before his next appointment some of his friends tried to dissuade him from filling it, but all to no purpose: he enjoyed the excitement of opposition too well to back out. Seeing he was determined to face his adversaries, his friends secretly joined themselves into a company about equal to the opposition, and agreed to protect him if he

should be assailed. When the time came he rode boldly up, and having hitched his horse, he detached the lash from a loaded horse-whip, took off his coat and laid it across his arm, and, with the handle of the whip reversed, walked toward the court house. As he passed through the astonished crowd near the door he politely invited the "gentlemen to come in, as it was near time for service to commence;" and the invitation was promptly complied with. Walking up to the judge's desk he laid his coat across one side, being careful to put his loaded whip near at hand: and after repeating and singing a few verses he knelt and prayed with his eyes open, thinking it safest, especially on that occasion, to watch as well as pray, as he expected an attack every moment. The preliminary services, such as they were, being over, he told the congregation that "he had been informed of the threats made against him, and he was fully prepared to meet any attempt to execute them." He pulled up his sleeve and showed them his arm, saying "he was brought up a blacksmith, and knew the strength of that arm;" and then unbuttoned his collar and exhibited his short and thick Dutch neck, saying, "a large neck indicated a spinal column of corresponding strength," and then asked the congregation if "they thought the Almighty had given him such muscular powers to let a set of ruffians run over him in a free country for doing his duty? He had been told that they had threatened the life of his predecessor, Drury Powell, somewhere thereabout, and that he had left the country before his time was out on account of it. It may be so; but he was not one of the running sort, and could not be got away on such terms. He

understood that they were going to duck the preacher in Red river that day, as some of their ilk had attempted to serve poor, unoffending Nolley at St. Martinsville; but he would advise them to let the preacher alone, lest somebody might get hurt. Finally, he intended that day to think what he pleased, to speak what he thought, and to quit when he was done." He then announced his text, and preached, we presume, a good deal more like Peter than Barnabas. The religious exercises being ended, he gave out his next appointment, and added, "he understood the use of the court house would probably be denied him thereafter, and if it was, that large cottonwood tree on the commons, near the bank of the river, would answer his purpose, and he would preach there." Taking up his saddle-bags and coat, and clubbing the handle of his loaded whip, he passed out; and as he left the house he heard several say to their fellows, "That's the man for me! I like a man that has nerve enough to do his duty, and defend himself, too, if necessary. I stand up for Shrock from this day!" When he was near his horse he heard his name called, and, turning round, saw a man approaching him at a quick step. "Do you come as a friend or foe?" inquired Mr. Shrock, squaring himself about with a bold front, and tossing up the loaded end of his whip handle. "I am your friend, Mr. Shrock," replied the man. "Then advance," said the preacher. The gentleman taking him cordially by the hand continued, "I come to invite you to dine with me to-day, and hereafter to make my house your home in Alexandria. You are the very man we need here to manage these cowardly disturbers of our place of worship, and we will give you our cordial support while you remain

among us and will dare to do your duty." From this time the ministers of the Gospel met with but little open opposition in Alexandria. We have repeatedly heard Mr. Shrock say that most of the men who united in this cabal to disturb and discourage the public worship of God in Alexandria came to an untimely end, and were known to have died wicked, while those in the opposite league seemed to be favored by Providence with life and prosperity, and hope in their death.

Various and exaggerated versions of Mr. Shrock's belligerent propensities, as manifested on this occasion, had been circulated through the country, so that when he appeared at the first Conference in Mississippi attended by a Bishop, to be ordained Elder—to which office he had been elected—he was called upon for a true version of the affair, which he gave with an air of self-justification. When he finished, Bishop Roberts looked at him rather reprovingly, and said: "Put up thy sword, Peter!" Under this mild reproof Mr. Shrock said he dwindled away to a point in his own estimation, and felt that an "augur hole" was large enough to contain what was left of his self-esteem. These items the writer repeatedly got from his own lips, during a long and intimate acquaintance with him.

John Shrock was an extensive reader, for his opportunities; an orthodox Methodist; was well posted in the doctrines, discipline and history of his Church; was a safe counselor for young ministers, and was an interesting and, at times, a powerful preacher. But there were sharp points in his character, which sometimes fretted and even exasperated some with whom he associated, both in and out of the Church. This was a mis-

fortune, not to say a fault, as it seemed to lessen his chances for usefulness. His labors were excessive during his itinerancy, and as his constitution seemed to be impaired, and his health declining, after having traveled four or five years, he married and located. His after life was just such as we have often witnessed in men who, in their holier and happier days, had consecrated their lives and their all to the work of the ministry, and afterward, in an evil hour, took back by far the greater part of the offering, by "asking for and obtaining a location." But though so many have been caught in this net, yet is not the net broken!

After his location he lived awhile, we think, in Catahoula parish, Louisiana; afterward in Franklin, and, at a later period, in Madison county, Mississippi. For the first fifteen years of his local life, though himself and his family lived cheap and worked hard—his wife often helping in out-door labor—he was perpetually annoyed with debts he could not pay. Often did he sigh to be free, that he might once more re-enter the intinerancy, and be a happy man. He indulged the thought that if he was only out of debt, and could see his family on safe ground, where, with ordinary industry and economy, they could live above want, he would unhesitatingly seek a re-union with the regular pastors of the Church. But how untrustworthy are such thoughts, often indulged in, no doubt, to quiet the present upbraidings of a conscience yet alive to its duties and responsibilities! Mr. Shrock honestly thought he would offer his services to the Conference again when his pecuniary circumstances became sufficiently improved to justify it, but when the opportunity offered he failed to do it.

It was about 1833 that, added to his own exertions, he obtained loans and donations enough from William Foster, senior, of Pine Ridge, to free him from debt, and leave him with a snug little farm, well stocked, and worked by several efficient hands. Then was the time he might have resumed the regular pastoral work; but the price of cotton was up—bank facilities were abundant—friends were willing to endorse for him—land and negroes not very high yet, but evidently advancing—why should he not take advantage of these "flush times" to make an independent fortune in a few years, so as to place his family above contingencies, and have something to fall back on in old age? The matter looked plausible—it could hardly be wrong under the circumstances—the decision was made, and he went into it soul and body. Negroes were bought on long credit—lands were bought and sold as prices appreciated, and all was hurry and bustle a few years. Then the price of cotton went down—the Mississippi banks broke as by general consent—merchants failed, and the masses everywhere seemed verging to bankruptcy. Mr. S hrock soon found himself oppressed with enormous debts—his creditors began to enforce their claims by process of law, and his securities begged to be released and refused further endorsement for him. His health perceptibly gave way under the onerous burden, his mind became perplexed and careworn, and hopeless insolvency, like a horrid goblin, perpetually danced before his imagination. It was late in the fall of 1839 that we spent a night with him at the house of our mutual friend and Christian, James Adams, near Canton. He was afflicted in body, and so oppressed in mind as to awaken deep concern

among his friends. "Brother Schrock," said the writer, "you now have a fair opportunity to illustrate, by your example, the sustaining and comforting power of that Gospel you have so long preached to others. Commit your case in earnest, believing prayer to God, depending on him to sustain and comfort you in your afflictions, and in his own good time to bring you out of your distresses." "Brother Jones," said he in reply," "I have no heart to ask the Lord to bring me out of these troubles, for he did not help me into them. I was embarrassed with debt a long time, until God in his good providence brought me out; and I ought to have stayed out, and returned to the work to which I had acknowledged myself called of God. But, like a fool and madman as I was, I determined to accumulate property, and rushed headlong into worldly plans for its acquisition; and now I am ruined for the balance of my life. I know it is not the will of God that I should commit sin, and the best I can do is to pray to be mercifully preserved from all iniquity."

Thus ended our last sad interview on earth with our old friend and brother, John Schrock. His unhappy situation was calculated to make a deep and lasting impression on the minds of all who acknowledge themselves called of God to the regular pastoral work, and to make them feel more determined never to leave it in order to engage in secular pursuits, except in cases of unavoidable necessity. Soon after this Mr. Schrock removed, with the remains of his shattered fortune, to the Republic of Texas. It was said his exit from Mississippi would not have been creditable to a minister, had not the spirit and practice of a bankrupt country cast the

veil of charity over his flight. He died soon after in Texas—where or how the writer has never learned. He had a large family, and probably has numerous descendants in Texas. He was a plain, blunt, honest, unsophisticated man, and those who knew him best had most confidence in his general uprightness of character. May his children and descendants largely partake of the blessings of that Gospel he so long preached to others, is our sincere prayer.

CHAPTER IX.

Rev. Thomas Griffin—His parentage, birth and early life—Is converted and joins the Methodists—Conflict about the cut of his coat—Enters the ministry under the protest of his father—In 1812 transferred to Mississippi District—Pioneering in Louisiana—Temptation in connection with the scantiness of his wardrobe—Characteristics of his preaching—Illustrative anecdotes—A good Presiding Elder—Speech in the General Conference of 1820—His temporary, and afterward his final location and death—Ashley Hewitt—Admitted first into the South Carolina Conference, and afterward transferred to Mississippi—The Apostle of Louisiana—Various removals—Final location—His style of preaching and its effects—Triumphant death of his daughter Nancy in answer to prevailing prayer—His death.

The truth of history requires that a prominent place should be allotted Rev. Thomas Griffin among the pioneer preachers of Mississippi and Louisiana in connection with the Methodist Episcopal Church. If the writer were to indulge his feelings, his long acquaintance with, and changeless affection for, Mr. Griffin might lead him to write more about him than would be justifiable in a book of this sort. He first enjoyed his singular but powerful preaching when a lad, and continued to be thrilled with his peculiar eloquence and pathos when he got to be a man of grey hairs. There were several preachers cotemporary with Thos. Griffin whose manner and style of preaching was quite out of the modern course, among whom he was the most conspicuous. Whether the times developed their peculiar characteristics, or whether they were copying after some leading spirit, or whether men of their peculiar talents were providentially raised up to suit what was then the prevailing state of society, we are not prepared to determine, though we incline to the latter opinion. Be this as it may, the hero of our present sketch was as celebrated for his attractive peculiarities

as he was for his personal piety and true evangelical zeal. Thomas Griffin was of Welch extraction, and was the son of John Griffin and Mary his wife, whose maiden name was Andrew, both Virginians. He was born in Cumberland county, Virginia, September 24, 1787. About 1792 or 1793 his parents moved to Oglethorpe county, Georgia, where they reared their family on the frontiers of civilization, amid the perils of hostile Indians. His mother was a Baptist, and his father what he called "a highland, or dry-footed Baptist;" one who stood on the bank, and pointing to the water said, "that is the right way," but never went that way himself. Thomas grew up to manhood familiar with the hardships, dangers and rude manners of frontier life. He acknowledged himself to have been wild and wicked, and full of fun and frolic in his youth, but often the subject of deep religious impressions. His mother appears to have been a true Christian, and more in earnest for the personal salvation of her children than merely to have them outwardly connected with her own denomination. There was something in her Christian experience that responded to the warm-hearted zeal and piety of the Methodists, so that she not only attended their meetings herself, but continued to have her children with her as often as practicable. The result was that Thomas was awakened and converted through the instrumentality of the Methodist preachers, as many a poor heedless sinner has been.

Owing to the conflicting views of the Baptists and Methodists on certain points, he had some trouble in settling his religious creed; but after such an investigation of the matters at issue as his limited education, directed by an

honest conscience, enabled him to make, he became a thorough Methodist. He had a short but severe struggle about giving up the fashionable costume of the day and donning the old-fashioned, round-breasted, colonial coat and vest, which were still adhered to with great tenacity by the Methodists of those days. He, however, purchased the materials and set off to the tailor's shop to have him a suit made that would indicate to all beholders his Church relations. As he proceeded, something seemed to whisper to his heart, "Tom, you're a fool!—going to have this piece of broadcloth spoiled by a fashion that you may soon be ashamed to wear, especially if you should backslide and want to leave the Methodists, as some have done before." The conflict was hot in his mind when he entered the tailor's door as to the cut of his new coat. "So many new fashions these days, Mr. Griffin," said the tailor; "how will you have it cut, sir?" "Just so," responded Mr. Griffin, making a circular cut with the hand down his side in the shape of a schooner bottom. He said ever afterward, "just there the devil gave him up on the subject of dress," and he continued to wear the round-breasted coat to the close of life. Soon after his conversion he began to feel "inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to preach the Gospel." He tried to excuse himself from undertaking such a life-long and responsible work, on the ground of his utter want, as he thought, of the natural and acquired abilities for the sacred office; but still a solemn voice sounded within his heart on all occasions, "woe is me if I preach not the Gospel."

It soon became evident to the family that Tom, as he was usually called, had his heart set on becoming a Meth-

odist itinerant preacher. "It won't do, my son," said his father; "the pay is too inadequate to the amount of sacrifice and labor required. The Methodist Church is a bad paymaster. If you go, I shall expect to find you one of these days amongst strangers, destitute of money and clothes, so that you will have to return home for a supply."

But Thomas had now decided on the path of duty, as clearly indicated by what he believed was a Divine call to the work of the ministry, and in 1810 he was duly admitted on trial in the South Carolina Conference, which then included the State of Georgia. His first year he traveled Montgomery circuit, in North Carolina, as the junior of John Gamewell, having Jonathan Jackson for his Presiding Elder. In 1811 he was in charge of Brunswick circuit, in the southeastern corner of North Carolina, with Aaron Mattox as his colleague. At the ensuing Conference for 1812 he was received into full connection, and ordained Deacon; and, with Lewis Hobbs and others, was transferred to the Mississippi District of the Western Conference, and appointed to Washita circuit. It is not necessary to mention all the circuits and districts he traveled in the vast territory west and east of the Mississippi river during his itinerant career. We would rather speak of the characteristics of this unique, laborious and successful minister of the Gospel. He found the population sparse, and the state of society exceedingly rude and disorganized in Louisiana during his four or five years' service there, both as preacher in charge and as Presiding Elder. He endured many privations, and traveled and preached constantly; in addition to which his purse was often light and his wardrobe very scant.

While on Sicily Island, on one occasion, he began to think his father's prediction about his destitution of money and clothes was about to be realized. His purse was in a state of collapse, and the well-worn pants he had on was his last wearable pair. Considerably after nightfall he was threading his way along a dim path toward the hospitable residence of Micajah Pickett, junior, when his horse fell and deposited him among some brambles, which made sundry rents in his pants. He soon recovered his horse, and after a short search, regained the path, but was deeply mortified and discouraged on discovering the condition of his apparel. Something seemed to say to him upbraidingly, "this is just what your father told you, Tom! Here you are in the western wilds, almost without either money or clothes, your last pair of pants used up! You will have to give it up at these rates and go at something else, or go back home, as your father invited you to do when you should realize the fulfillment of his prophesy." With these unpleasant forebodings of pending want, he alighted at Mr. Pickett's, and soon began to apologise for the unsightly appearance of his clothes by relating the story of his fall among the brambles. "O, never mind that brother Griffin," interposed Mrs. Pickett, "I have got a bran-new pair already made, and have just been waiting for you to come and get them." "Get thee behind me, Satan," ejaculated Mr. Griffin, as he received his new pants from the hands of the kind donor, "thou art the father of lies. After all thy suggestions about my destitution, here I have a timely supply for present wants." In his person, Mr. Griffin was about medium height, square built, rather stoop-shoul-

dered, muscular and active, sallow complexion, with a sharp, Grecian face and quizzical eye that would attract observation in any company. He was remarkable for his ready wit and withering sarcasm. His strong point in preaching was his life-like delineations of every phase of character, which sometimes led strangers to imagine that he had in some way got their history, and was making attacks on them from the pulpit. He generally painted the vices of the people in life-like colors, and lifted up his thundering voice in denunciation against them. One or two anecdotes will suffice to illustrate how effectually this was done. In south-western Louisiana stock-raising entered largely into the products of the country in those days, and was a fruitful source of neighborhood feuds, as some men were very much inclined to appropriate the stock of others to their own use. When Mr. Griffin was on the Louisiana District he had a Quarterly meeting somewhere about the Vermillion bay. It was very common in those days to have two sermons preached on such occasions, at eleven and twelve o'clock on the Sabbath. The preacher in charge of the circuit preached the opening sermon that day, which he delivered in a precise and logical style, accompanied with but little feeling. When he closed, Mr. Griffin rose up, and with one of those ominous looks which made the audience feel that he was going to do something, without affording any clue as to what it would be, he commenced by saying, "My hearers, the brother who has just closed preached you an elegant sermon, but my fear is he overshot you. I intend to come down to your capacity and give you a batch of new-fangled divinity; something that you can understand."

After this introduction, he took up the prevailing vices of the community, and delineated them in all their moral deformity and damning tendencies. Among other vices he paid special attention to the too common practice of branding other people's cattle, and supplying their families with pork from their neighbor's hogs. He gave a very graphic description of the process of hog stealing—how the hog was captured, his ears taken off and thrown to a hungry dog, and the hair singed off with prairie grass, in order to destroy all the flesh marks to prevent detection and its consequences. The audience became intensely interested—all eyes were fixed on the preacher, and all ears were attentive, as picture after picture, drawn from living examples, passed in rapid succession before the mind. One man became so absorbed in the new-fangled divinity, as the preacher called it, that he unconsciously drew himself forward until he suddenly dropped to the floor in front of his seat. "Curious Gospel, that," said one, after the sermon was ended. "Let us try and keep that preacher in our country," said another; "I will give fifty dollars a year to keep him here to save my stock." At one of his preaching places in Catahoula parish, a pedagogue, who had avowed himself a Deist, was pretending to "teach the young idea how to shoot," when Mr. Griffin came there with his "new, sharp threshing instrument, having teeth," and preached one of his raking sermons, taking as one of his positions that "Deism and licentiousness were generally found closely united in the same person." The school-teacher pretended to be greatly offended; declared that Griffin was too rude and unpolished to preach to refined and intelligent people, and swore that

if ever he attempted it there again he would give him a thrashing. Some one apprised Mr. Griffin of the threat, that he might not be taken by surprise. Mr. Griffin remarked, that "I never judge a man's character by the clothes he wears, nor by what he represents himself to be; if I wish to know just what he is, I take the back track and hunt up his antecedents; and all I wish now is to be put on the back track of this disciple of Tom Paine, so that I may find out where he is from, and what he has been doing heretofore." Fortunately for his purpose he got a correct outline of his history by his next appointment, and appropriated a part of his discourse to the subject. "My respected hearers," said he, "at my previous appointment, you may recollect, that I took as one of my positions that Deism and licentiousness were generally found closely united in the same person. I now propose to give another representative example to illustrate that position. There lived, not many years ago, in one of the districts of South Carolina, a professed disciple of Tom Paine, who was arraigned by due course of law before a tribunal of competent jurisdiction—not for saying his prayers or building Churches, but for shedding blood! Yes, my hearers, for shedding blood! Not the blood of his fellow-men, but the blood of his neighbor's hogs! Of this offense, committed without the fear of God before his eyes, and by the instigation of the devil, against the peace of society and the lives of hogs not his own, he was found guilty and sentenced to receive thirty-nine lashes on his bare back at the District whipping-post. After receiving the Sheriff's receipt in full in the way of knots, gashes and cross-marks, and having now the fear of hog-herds before

his eyes, he left the country 'for parts unknown.' The next place we find him is in that celebrated school of learning generally known as Natchez under the hill, where he spent about three months in the study of natural philosophy. He prosecuted his studies with such untiring devotion that he soon exhausted both his cash and credit, so that he was ejected from the boarding and lodging department for non-payment of dues. Possessing some little versatility of mind, he assumed the profession of a school-teacher, and the last I knew of him he was pretending to teach a little country school in one of the parishes not far to the west of Natchez, and threatening to whip a certain Methodist preacher for exposing the licentious tendencies of Deism. A pretty fair specimen this of the morality, or I should say, immorality of infidelity." The school-teacher, no doubt from fear of provoking a personal application of the illustrative part of the discourse, assumed great gravity, and after the service was over remarked to some who had heard his threat, that "Mr. Griffin improved on further acquaintance, and he reckoned it was best to have a few such preachers in the country, so he would not interrupt him." It will be difficult for those who never heard Mr. Griffin's scathing denunciation of vice to appreciate the life-like manner in which he did it, or the power with which he spoke. If he had occasion to describe the deceiver and seducer of the young and unsuspecting, he portrayed him as "a whitewashed, hollow-hearted, hypocritical, double-faced monster of iniquity, with a heart as black as night." If he was led to exhibit the self-conceited and presumptuous sinner, he was "one of

your real Gospel-slighting, heaven-neglecting, God-provoking, devil-daring, hell-deserving rebels against the majesty of the universe." The drunkard, in his estimation, "was a far worse character than the frantic suicide who would take a pistol and blow out his brains, thus ridding his family of a pest and leaving his property for their maintenance, whereas the drunkard, after cursing and disgracing his family with his besotted example, afflicting them with his drunken revels, wasting his property, breaking the heart of his wife, and hanging his poor, ragged, uneducated children on the horns of poverty, is in the end a self-murderer." If he had occasion to hold up the superannuated debauchee in order to show that "the way of transgressors is hard," he would describe him as "the very frazzle-ends of humanity; his debauched carcass would disgrace a wolf trap if put in it for bait. If he should die by the wayside a decent turkey-buzzard would consult the dignity of his beak before he would condescend to pick out his blood-shot eyes. If hell itself could be raked over it is doubtful whether a more deeply-fallen spirit could be found." These imperfect examples will suffice to give to the reader some idea of his peculiar style of dealing with the common vices of the country. Another striking characteristic of Mr. Griffin was a natural, unstudied flow of the most unbearable wit that ever fell from the lips of man. He never manifested any feeling of levity in the pulpit himself; he was rather remarkable for his solemn, grave and earnest countenance when preaching; yet his transitions from the sublime and pathetic to the ludicrous were often so sudden and unexpected that his auditors would be

hurled from the centre of gravity into a paroxysm of laughter in spite of all their efforts to the contrary. He was full of sympathy, and often preached with such pathos that his vast audiences were moved from centre to circumference. O, it was a luxury not often otherwise enjoyed, to sit unobserved at night on a camp-meeting occasion, when he would preach one of his original sermons, where one might laugh and weep alternately for an hour without restraint! People would sometimes pretend to be greatly offended at his plain dealing with their delinquencies and sins, but still he had so many points of attraction about him that vast crowds from all the region round about would flock to hear him; and no man in his day made his mark deeper on the public mind than he did. He was instrumental in "turning many to righteousness" all through this country. His trophies were generally gained by a precipitate assault on the ranks of the enemy. If he took for his text, "Now, therefore, stand still, that I may reason with you before the Lord," his mode of *reasoning* was to hurl his projectiles from the armory of truth in such rapid succession that there was but little chance for a parley in the sinner's heart. He had such control over his voice that he could contract it to a conversational tone or extend it indefinitely. He was partial to such texts as allowed him to be very discursive in his remarks; and when he commenced his discourse you could not anticipate what he was going to say, nor how he would say it. One moment he would mount you on the wings of imagination and have you whirling through the infinitude of space, all enraptured with the magnificence of the surrounding scenery, and the next he would

have you down in contact with the every day occurrences of life. If a man had any taste either for the sublime or ridiculous, any love of virtue or hatred of vice, any hope of heaven or fear of hell, he could not be an uninterested hearer when Thomas Griffin, under the mighty impulses of the Spirit, preached one of his characteristic sermons. His acquaintance with human nature in all its phases was decidedly superior; his judgment was mature; his administrative talents above mediocrity, so that, from the time he was eligible, he was generally kept in charge of districts. "I have read books a good deal," said he, "but I have read men and things a great deal more." The truth of this remark was verified by the quick, common-sense view he took of everything that came within the range of his observation. As a Presiding Elder he was a general favorite among his preachers, who both reverenced and loved him. If they conducted themselves prudently and attended well to their work, they were sure of a high commendation at Conference; but woe betide the laggard, the imprudent, the self-conceited or fashion-loving Methodist preacher who fell under his official censure! He was apt to put an extinguisher on all such characters. We remember once two juniors were before the Conference for admission into full connection and election to Deacon's orders. One of them had acted literally on the principle that "gaining knowledge is a good thing, but saving souls is better;" and in his ardent zeal, both in public and private, to bring sinners to Christ and build up the Church in Gospel holiness, he had almost ignored the course of study. The other had dressed fashionably, feigned the gentleman, filled his appointments nominally, while he neg-

lected almost every pastoral duty; but, ambitious for advancement, he had given extra attention to the course of study. The Conference, acting on the report of the Examining Committee, were just ready to reject the former and advance the latter, when Mr. Griffin sprang to his feet, and with his peculiar bow, shrug of the shoulders and squint of the eyes, which no one on earth could successfully imitate, said: "Mr. President, some Methodist preachers remind me of a cunning scholar, who, ambitious to excel in mere scholarship, neglects every other duty, and shuts himself up with his books, and prepares for the day of examination. The preaching of such men to me is like the evening star of a frosty night, very clear, very bright and very beautiful, but tremendously cold," and here he gave a shudder as though a shaking ague had just seized his whole frame. The speaker continued, "Now, Mr. President, here are two cases before us: one brother has almost literally swept the earth and skimmed the ocean (his circuit was on the Gulf coast) in quest of precious blood-bought souls, but in doing this he has not found time to complete his course of study. The other brother has attended his appointments, preached his little bright, clear, cold sermons, dined on fat turkeys among the aristocracy of Red river, and then shut himself up with his books, in order to pass a good examination on the course of study at Conference, in view of his promotion to office in the Church. I go for the man, sir, that does the *work* of an evangelist, and best accomplishes the great object of the Gospel ministry—that of saving souls." This speech had its intended effect on the pending cases. But we will have to stop these

reminiscences or exceed our limits. Thomas Griffin and John Lane were the first delegates from the Mississippi to the General Conference, which held its quadrennial session in Baltimore, May 1, 1820. Both being originally from the South Carolina Conference, they made the entire trip on horseback, in order to visit relations and former acquaintances on the way. Soon after the opening of the General Conference the subject of slavery came up, as a matter of course, for the people in the Northern States after having sold what slaves they once owned to the people of the Southern States, and pocketed the money, have ever since been "convinced of the great evil of slavery," and have labored for its extirpation. The motion before the General Conference on this occasion was to "prohibit slaveholders from holding official stations in the Church in future." The anti-slavery members came down in their speeches as usual on "the great evil," while some of the Southern members replied in rather an excusatory and supplicating tone, which met with no response in the views and feelings of Mr. Griffin. On the 23d of the month, when the question which had been so long and so zealously debated had to be decided soon, one way or the other, Mr. Griffin rose with excited feelings, and delivered one of his impromptu speeches. This speech went through many verbal editions, until, near twenty years after its delivery, it got into the secular papers in a garbled form, and in a way to misrepresent the speaker. Mr. Griffin then thought it due to himself, as well as to truth, to give the public a correct edition of his speech, which was published at Natchez, in the *Free Trader*, then under the editorship of Col.

J. F. H. Claibourne. We here insert the speech as published:

"Mr. President, I am willing to concede that I have lived longer than I have lived to profit, and many things have passed me unimproved. But among the few things I have noticed is that of *Northern men coming to the South*. Sir, when they first come among us, it seems as if they could see us all damned and double-damned, rammed, crammed and jammed into a forty-six pounder and blown into the fiery vaults of a deep damnation for being connected with slavery! Nay, their pious zeal would not stop there; it seems they would get on their knees and invoke the thunderbolts of an avenging God to sink our sin-murdered souls to the lowest hell! But in twelve months time they become a *teetle* smoother on the subject, and if they contemplate a *permanent* stay, if they have either worth, shrewdness or intrigue enough, they are sure to form alliances with our slave-holding families.

"We have young ladies in the South—charming ones, too—owning no slaves, and entirely unconnected with slavery, but Northern gentlemen always seem, some how or other, to see peculiar charms in those young ladies whose parents possess the *largest number of niggers*. Who ever heard of a Mississippi Yankee fancying a girl that owned no slaves? Sir, if a stranger was in that gallery, he would conclude that we Southerners were a pack of cannibals, who kill and eat our slaves. We have heard much about blood-stained hands. I am almost startled, and look around for them. Where are they? I would ask a question: how came slaves into this country? Northern men, Northern money and

Northern ships brought them to America. The Yankees kept them at home until they cut down their forests, and so exhausted their farms that they would scarcely grow a crop of sedge, and then, with a shrewdness and foresight peculiar to the North, they sent them to us on speculation, just as they sent us rum, and staves, and wooden nutmegs. Our fathers gave them value received, and now we are to be condemned, without mixture of mercy, for holding the same property those Northerners once possessed. It is possible, should the period arrive in the South when our lands are worn out, we shall become very patriotic, moral and religious, like our Northern brethren, and wash our hands of slavery. We are told here that it is one of the most heaven-daring, God-provoking, hell-deserving crimes that man can commit. But I wonder when Jesus Christ came from heaven to earth to set men right that he did not touch the subject. I wonder that the Apostles, who denounced the smallest transgression, should have entirely passed over this *enormous offense*. And if it be offensive and sinful to own slaves, I wish some one would just put his finger on the place in Holy Writ. *We* have no difficulty in pointing to the passages where slavery is recorded and sanctioned, and rules prescribed for the owner and the owned. We are told the time has come when something must be done. The venerable man whose remains lie under that pulpit (Bishop Asbury), and Dr. Coke, thought so many years ago, and made such a move as they thought prudence dictated, and what was the consequence? Laws were made more rigorous, and every avenue of religious instruction closed to the negro, and while he remained in the same, or a worse condition in

body, his mind was void of that instruction that might have saved his soul from sin. That, sir, was the result of *intermeddling*. Some of our brethren seem to be proud that they labor in free communities. Sir, why this *ministerial* pride? What has the Church or ministry done to Christianize the negro? Almost nothing! Policy and the Legislatures have, in all cases, moved in advance. The Church should stand aloof from meddling with the social and civil relations of the negro. Her business is to Christianize him. In conclusion, Mr. President, I see that there is strength enough on the anti-slavery side of this Assembly to pass any resolutions they please. But here, in my place, as one of the representatives of the Mississippi Conference, I tell you I will never aid in executing them. And if the resolution now under consideration should pass, you may send ship loads of men from the North to execute it, but permit me to say in advance, whenever they come to the South and meddle with Southern institutions, they will find their situation very *delicate*, if not *perilous* in the extreme."

At the conclusion of Mr. Griffin's speech the pending resolution was tabled, and though taken up again, it was not finally acted upon.

Mr. Griffin located the first time in 1823, which he said he did "with as clear a conscience as he ever drank a cup of coffee," for his bodily strength was no longer able to endure the hardships of itinerancy. Three years' rest, with the care he was able to take of himself at home, so far restored his health that in 1826 he re-entered the Conference, and was continued on districts until his final location in 1833. He was a Delegate to

the General Conferences of 1828 and 1832. We have always been sorry that Mr. Griffin located, but, as he often said in extenuation of his course, "he had grown old before his time; his family was large, and the government and education of his children seemed to require his presence at home; he had a great fondness for retirement, and being thrifty in his temporal affairs, his resources were ample, so that he did not need the revenues of the Church." But, notwithstanding all these plausible excuses for locating, we think he ought not to have done it. He ought to have had work to suit his age and providential circumstances, or he ought, when no longer able to do effective service, to have been placed on the superannuated list. We needed his presence and counsels at our Annual Conferences; it would have been a pleasure to his co-laborers to have retained his honored name on their minutes and handed it down to posterity, accompanied with an appropriate memoir of his life and labors. As it is, the concluding notice about him in the printed minutes is simply the answer to the question, "Who have located this year?" His location, however, did not terminate his labors and usefulness as a minister. As a local elder he was active in filling both regular and irregular appointments. The writer has seldom met with a more ready and active extraveling preacher than he was. He was a warm advocate of camp-meetings, and earnestly desired their continuance as a means of building up and extending the Church. So far as the writer knows, he always supported a large tent on the camp ground in his neighborhood. Mr. Griffin was what may be termed an old-fashioned Methodist, in principle and practice, and was

anxious to train up his family in the same way. He was most sensibly grieved at the introduction of anything into the Church which tended to worldliness in the membership. He looked with sad and discouraged feelings especially on the tendency of some of the younger ministers and their families to conform to the superfluous fashions of the country in regard to dress and jewelry. He said when he attempted to check this growing tendency in his own household, they would sometimes "chunk him down" by quoting the example of some of the ministers and their families. He has been heard to remark that it afforded him the greatest pleasure to entertain the itinerant ministers at his house, but occasionally one came along that, "if he could accommodate him and his horse, and keep him hid out where his family would not see him at all, he would greatly prefer it." In a few instances his plain dealing with some of the younger preachers in regard to what he considered their yielding, worldly tendencies, occasioned them to avoid his company, which grieved him very much. Had he survived long enough to see the after-lives of some of these young men, they would not have grown much in his estimation, as they certainly did not in the estimation of the Church generally. Mr. Griffin spent the first years of his married life in the lower valley of Pearl river; then he lived awhile on one of the northern branches of Bayou Pierre, called White Oak; but finally he settled in the northeastern part of Madison county, where he resided at the time of his death. He was prosperous in secular affairs until the financial revulsion of 1838 and 1839, when he became somewhat embarrassed by endorsement, which gave him considerable

anxiety and trouble. Nature in his case was literally worn out, and he went gracefully down to his grave. Not long before his death one of the ministers asked him to state, for the good of others, what his prospects were beyond the tomb. His laconic reply was, "If any of my friends wish to know where I have gone after my death, my life is before them, let them look at that." On another occasion he remarked to one of the ministers, "Were it not for the ties that bind me to my family, I would not turn my hand over for a choice to live or die." There is an extensive manuscript autobiography of this great and good man, written in his characteristic style not long before his death, which, in judicious hands, might be converted into a very readable book. It is in the possession of his children.

We heard Bishop Soule express a wish in the Mississippi Conference as far back as 1825, "that the time might come when the question, 'Who have located this year?' might be stricken forever from the list of our Annual Conference questions." Perhaps this would not be best as a universal rule, for by granting a location an Annual Conference may sometimes clear itself of a man troublesome in, and evidently unsuitable for, the itinerant work, but who may be acceptable and useful as a local preacher. But in regard to all trustworthy and faithful itinerant ministers we can sincerely reiterate the wish of the Bishop for many weighty reasons, one of which is, to prevent the names and example of some of our most holy and useful ministers from being almost completely lost to posterity by their location. We never saw Tobias Gibson, Samuel Parker or Lewis Hobbs, the "weeping prophet," and yet how often

have we been admonished, instructed and comforted by reading the short memoirs of their holy and useful lives and peaceful deaths, as found in the printed minutes. But who knows anything now about Ashley Hewitt, the apostle of Louisiana, except that he was for many years on the roll of traveling preachers, and then located and got out of sight, and almost out of mind? As we have it in our power, from an intimate acquaintance with him of several years' continuance, as well as from other authentic sources, to give a sketch of his valuable life and saint-like death, we will make the attempt. Rev. Ashley Hewitt was admitted into the South Carolina Conference with nineteen others, in 1811, where he continued to labor with acceptability and usefulness for five years, in which time he graduated in due course to Deacon's and Elder's orders. He was then transferred to Mississippi, and traveled Tombeckbee Circuit in 1816. In 1817 he was Presiding Elder on the Louisiana District, and at the same time preacher in charge of Washita Circuit, and was continued on the same work in 1818. Having married Miss Lucretia Barlow, of Prairie Mer Rouge, Washita Parish, and no provision being made in Louisiana in those days for the families of traveling preachers, at the end of this year he located, but returned at the next Conference, and was again placed on the Louisiana District, and also in charge of Attakapas Circuit. In 1821 and 1822 he was continued on the district and was also preacher in charge of Washita Circuit. The two succeeding years he was on the supernumerary list, and was appointed Conference missionary, and the next year, 1825, he was again appointed to the district, but

at the end of the year his health was so completely run down that he was declared superannuated. He, however, removed his family from Prairie Mer Rouge to Lake Providence, at the earnest solicitation of Harbord Hood, a planter on the lake, and thus became the pioneer preacher in that region, where he soon succeeded in organizing a society.

In 1827 and 1828, though still in feeble health, he was retained on the supernumerary list that he might be placed in charge of the work at Lake Providence, which was now placed on the minutes as a regular circuit. At the end of his pastoral term on Lake Providence, as his health had become so broken down in the flat lands of Louisiana, he concluded to try the hills east of the Mississippi river, and removed his family to the vicinity of Vicksburg, and was in charge of Warren circuit, which then included Vicksburg, in 1829 and 1830. After trying the hills for two years he despaired of the recovery of his health, and being poor in earthly substance and depressed in spirit, he concluded to take his family back among their relations in Prairie Mer Rouge, where they had some land and a little patrimony to assist in their support. With a sad countenance he said to the writer, on the eve of his departure from Vicksburg, "The time will come, brother Jones, when the Church will provide for her married preachers, but it will come forever too late for me. I must return to the Mer Rouge, where I can raise corn and stock to feed my family with." Thus ended his history as a traveling preacher, after having endured hardness as a good soldier until his outer man was hopelessly prostrated. How sad the thought that such a man, after having spent all the

prime and strength of his manhood in the service of the Church, should be compelled to follow the plough and herd cattle in order to secure a scanty support for his wife and little ones! It is some consolation, however, to know that Mr. Hewitt was somewhat thrifty in business after his location, and having received some property from his father-in-law's estate, he soon drew around him a competency for the support of his family, including the ordinary comforts of domestic life. But the Mississippi Conference did wrong to let such a man locate. We do not regret the location of some men who get into the Conference, for they never have been, and we presume never will be, anything but a tax and trouble to the itinerancy, and it is a relief to get clear of such men on such easy terms. But such men as Ashley Hewitt ought to be retained on the superannuated list until they get a transfer from earth to heaven, notwithstanding their modest fears of becoming a tax to the Church, and in the way, and all that. Their co-laborers, at least, know how to appreciate men who have "borne the burden and heat of the day," and have worn themselves out in the work of the ministry.

Having given a brief sketch of Ashley Hewitt's connection with the itinerancy, we will now speak more particularly of his person, talents and influence as a minister. In person he was tall and spare, light complexion, mild blue eyes, large mouth and protruding lips; countenance indicative of satisfaction and benevolence, and there was a general air of innocence in all he said and did. In the pulpit he stood erect; his gestures were slow and moderate, and he seldom looked into the faces of his auditors more than an instant at a time, but

seemed to be looking around on the walls just above their heads. In his prime he had a clear, loud voice, but he never screamed, and his enunciation was rather slow and remarkably distinct. His sermons were well planned, and were more didactic than hortatory. If you heard him preach a sermon the second time, it was almost precisely in the same words and sentences first heard, and yet he never wrote or memorized his sermons. He took no one by storm, but when he preached in the spirit—as he often did—the tide of feeling gradually rose higher and higher in the interested hearer, until he was quite overwhelmed.

In 1826 Dr. Alexander Talley, at that time Presiding Elder on the Louisiana District, and the writer got up a little camp-meeting in the pine hills, about fifteen miles west of Monroe, in Washita parish. Mr. Hewitt being present by special invitation, was requested to preach on Sunday morning, when he might be heard by his old acquaintances, among whom he had previously labored fourteen years. His heart and voice were both in first-rate tune that day, and he preached a most heavenly sermon. We felt, toward the conclusion, that we could bear no more of the Divine presence and love without prostration to the ground. After the conclusion of the service we inquired of Dr. Talley how he enjoyed the sermon? He replied, "It liked to have killed me! It seemed to me the earthen vessel was so full it was ready to break and let my enraptured soul fly away toward heaven." Such were the calm, distinct and glowing sermons of Ashley Hewitt. The Louisianians ought to embalm his memory, for there was a time when the itinerant ministry would have been withdrawn from

west of the Mississippi had it not been for his intercession. The harvest of souls had been very scant in Western Louisiana up to the end of 1817. The local difficulties in the way of traveling a large part of the year were almost insurmountable to everybody except professed hunters and Methodist preachers. The support of the ministry was meagre indeed, and the soil in which the precious seeds of Gospel truth were deposited was still very unproductive. In the meantime the eastern portion of the Conference, especially the rich lands of Alabama, was being settled up very fast, and the demand for preachers there was much beyond the supply. In this state of affairs it was suggested in the Bishop's Council that it might be best to withdraw the preachers from west of the Mississippi and appropriate their labors to a more promising field; and the subject was gravely discussed. Ashley Hewitt remonstrated against the withdrawal of the preachers, and successfully advocated the cause of Western Louisiana. "Was it sound policy," said he, "to lose what little had been gained by so much privation and toil? What would become of those few sheep in the wilderness, if the shepherds were all taken away?" The conclusion was to appropriate only two preachers to that vast field, and accordingly the appointments for 1818 stand thus in the minutes: "Louisiana District, Ashley Hewitt, Presiding Elder; Attakapas, Thomas Nixon; Washita, Ashley Hewitt."

There is a beautiful anecdote, illustrative of the power of faith, connected with the death of Mr. Hewitt's oldest daughter, Nancy, which occurred a short time before his own death, that has been wholly ruined for all religious purposes by a misstatement of facts, especially as

related in the autobiography of Rev. Joseph Travis. Mr. Travis, doubtless, wrote what was told him, but his informant was utterly at fault. He calls her Elizabeth; represents her as being the only unconverted child Mr. Hewitt had of mature age; says she died and was shrouded, and after lying about an hour, opened her eyes and said, "Glory to God, my sins are all forgiven, etc.;" all of which is untrue. The writer was intimately acquainted with Mr. Hewitt's family, and got the history of this most interesting case from those who were eye-witnesses of the whole scene, and though he may not use their precise language, he can certainly state the facts correctly. Nancy Hewitt was a most lovely young lady; in person and natural disposition she seemed to be an exact copy of her sainted father, and there was an air of gracefulness and innocence in all her movements. To see her was to love and admire her.

We think it was in September, 1833, that we visited the Prairie Mer Rouge on business, and while there held a two days' meeting, at which time Miss Nancy Hewitt with several others united with the Church as seekers of salvation. She did not, however, obtain the full assurance of faith until just before she died, which occurred, we think, within the next two years. She was taken with measles, which induced other diseases, and she went into a rapid decline. In the meantime her father's health was so far gone that he was becoming quite bed-ridden. When he saw that his lovely daughter was marked for death, he became deeply interested about her spiritual condition. Feeble as he was he arose in the stillness of the night and prayed earnestly that she might obtain an assurance of her accept-

ance and salvation before her departure, but no response came, and a cloud rested on the good man's soul. He arose and prayed a second time, but the answer was not yet; and, "being in an agony, he prayed" the third time. Then it was that the clouds dispersed; unbelief was superceded by strong, commanding faith, and a sweet assurance settled down upon his heart that Nancy would have a bright manifestation of her union with Christ before she left them. She continued to decline, and soon the last conflict came. Mrs. Hewitt entered the room of her now bed-ridden husband and announced that Nancy was dying. "Has she professed to find peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ?" inquired Mr. Hewitt. The question being answered negatively, he continued, "Then she will not die yet. I could as soon doubt my own religious experience as to doubt that she will have a bright evidence of the forgiveness of all her sins before she leaves us. Please return to her room and remain with her." Mrs. Hewitt soon returned with the sad intelligence that Nancy was dead! "Did she profess to have an assurance of her salvation?" inquired the father, with emphasis. "O no! she said nothing about it," was the reply. "Then she is not dead," he confidently affirmed. "God will not disappoint my faith and let my hope be lost." "O, Mr. Hewitt," said the weeping mother, "if you could see Nancy as I saw her just now, you too would believe her dead!" The functions of life were evidently suspended for a few moments, while the spirit was undergoing "the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost." But her aunt Knox soon discovered a slight motion of her lips, and putting her ear close to

her face began to hear, in a faint whisper, "O Jesus, Jesus! sweet Jesus! Thou art come! I am happy! so happy! Glory to God!" etc. She roused up under the heavenly excitement, had the family called together, requested the servants to be invited in, and "witnessed a good confession" before all, assuring them of her salvation, and exhorting them all to meet her in heaven. Her strength and voice kept up well until her work was done, and then she began to sink rapidly. "Aunt Knox," said she, "I am so sleepy I can scarcely keep my eyes open, but I am afraid to go to sleep lest I should lose my happy feelings and my bright evidence of my acceptance in Christ Jesus." "You need not fear that, my dear," said her aunt, "Jesus will take care of you; go to sleep if you feel like it." She then closed her eyes and soon quietly breathed her last. "Brother Hewitt's faith in that case," said Bishop Soule, when the circumstances were related to him at our ensuing Conference, "ought to be recorded for the benefit of the Church."

Mr. Hewitt did not long survive his daughter, and his calm and tranquil death was in keeping with his holy and useful life. In some respects, like his Lord and Master, "he was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," but we have seldom found a character in the ministry more consistent and lovely than his. It makes our hearts better, and encourages our devotion to the cause of God, to meditate on the life of such a man. The Louisiana Conference should see that a suitable monument be placed upon his grave.

CHAPTER X.

Rev. James Griffing—His conversion—Licensed to preach—Declines itinerating on account of a spinal injury—Long and useful life as a local preacher—His triumphant death—More of the first fruits of Methodism in Missis-ippi and Louisiana—Hannah Swayze—Penelope Griffing—Hannah Griffing—Lydia Corey—Disorganized state of society in Louisiana—Sylvanus Bascom—Holland—Harbord Hood.

We now resume our short sketches of a few of the early Methodists in Mississippi and Louisiana, with which we propose to close our account of the introduction of Methodism into Mississippi and the Southwest. Among the early conversions under the ministry of Tobias Gibson was that of James Griffing. Soon after the arrival of Mr. Gibson at Natchez, he visited the family of John Griffing, Esq., near Selsertown, and was invited to make his house one of his regular preaching places. The word preached soon took effect on the family, and Mr. and Mrs. Griffing, and all their children yet at home and of suitable age, joined the Church, among whom was the subject of this sketch, then about eighteen years old. He was born on St. Catharine, near the road leading from Natchez to Washington, September 21, 1782. His conviction of sin soon became deep and thorough, and was accompanied with many discouragements and feelings of despondency. So sincere, and yet so protracted, were his struggles against sin and unbelief that his case excited the sympathy and prayers of those who had already "tasted of the heavenly gift and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost." "Weeping may endure for a night," says the Psalmist, "but joy cometh in the morning." His long and dreary night of sin and sor-

row was destined to pass away, and be succeeded by a long day of heavenly light, and love and joy. On his way to their usual place of worship one Sabbath morning, faith began to spring up in his hitherto desponding heart, and he felt a sweet assurance that deliverance was near at hand. He began to look for and *expect* the long-sought blessing *that very day;* and in this frame of mind he continued to seek the Lord earnestly. His maternal grandmother, Mrs. Hannah Curtis, was a woman of "unfeigned faith," and mighty in prayer, and while on that day she was leading the devotions of the Church in one of her eloquent and prevailing prayers, an overwhelming influence came down upon the soul of young Griffing, under the impulses of which he fell backward and unconsciously pushed himself some distance over the floor. In this mighty struggle his faith took hold of Christ as an atoning sacrifice for sin, and he was brought to feel that "God was in Christ reconciled" to him. When the darkness of unbelief fled before the light of confiding faith in Christ as his willing, all-sufficient and present Savior, he was filled with rapturous joy, and indulged his enraptured feelings in loud shouts of "glory to God in the highest;" and for more than fifty years, at short intervals, in the grove, at the family altar, and in the assembly of the saints, the same triumphant shout was often heard, and only ceased its reverberations on earth when his spirit returned to God to enjoy the rest that remains to the finally faithful. Shortly after his conversion he felt "constrained by the love of Christ"—to preach the great salvation to his fellow-men, and was duly licensed—he being the second licentiate of the

Methodist Episcopal Church within what is now the State of Mississippi. On entering the ministry he met with a severe trial in the decided opposition of his father, who had been trained up under what is technically called an educated ministry, and who, consequently, thought his son wholly disqualified for the sacred office, because he had only a limited, rudimental English education. But the evident sincerity of his son, with a better display of talents than he had anticipated, soon changed his opposition to encouragement, and he thenceforth bid him God-speed. Mr. Griffing was urged by Lauuer Blackman, who then had charge of the work in the Natchez District, to enter the itinerancy; but after traveling awhile with Mr. Blackman, he was induced to believe that a spinal injury he had received when a lad by the upsetting of a cart would not justify any further attempt in that direction, and he married and settled in Claibourne county, near Big Black river. After remaining there a few years he removed to the place of his late residence, ten miles east of Port Gibson, where he spent the last forty years of his life. As a local preacher he graduated to Deacon's and Elder's orders, in due course. The writer was intimately acquainted with him from his earliest recollection to the time of his death, and a purer and more conscientious Christian and minister he has never known. He was not content merely to live outwardly conformed to the requirements of the Gospel; he earnestly desired and constantly sought sensible communion with God, and in this he was greatly favored. His was a happy Christianity, realized in a long life of care and toil, and, if possible, more fully during his last illness. Mr. Griffing was remarka-

bly careful and deliberate in forming his opinions, and in all his movements. He seemed anxious to be right in all things, and so to live as to enjoy the approving smiles of his Heavenly father. He was an orthodox Methodist Episcopalian, and often in his sermons took occasion to defend the doctrines of his Church, especially that of general redemption. Toward the close of life he dwelt mostly on the love of God to man, as exhibited in the glorious plan of human salvation. He was fervent in spirit, but his sermons were more solid than impulsive and showy. Mr. Griffing was a remarkably safe counselor for awakened sinners, young Christians and young ministers. The writer acknowledges himself to have been greatly benefitted while passing through all these trying periods of his early pilgrimage by the exemplary piety, Godly counsel and fervent prayers of this good man. Often during the itinerant wanderings of thirty-four years did he turn aside to spend a night with this sainted man, and always found so much of heaven in all he said, and especially in his religious exercises, that it had a uniform tendency to make him feel like trying to live a better Christian. Mr. Griffing reared a large family of children, most, if not all, of whom, became converted members of the Church of his choice. One of his sons, Rev. James Y. Griffing, was for twenty years an itinerant minister in the Mississippi Conference, but his patriotism led him to the tented field in 1862, and he was killed in the battle of Leesburg, in Virginia. Rev. Ephraim A. Flowers, of the Mississippi Conference, is a son-in-law of the venerable patriarch. The family was never thrifty in the acquisition of property, yet Mr. Griffing, by a slow

but sure process, accumulated a handsome estate, sufficient to make him quite comfortable in his old age. His general health being good until near the close of life, he attended most of the protracted meetings in his reach, and while laboring, as his strength would permit, for the good of others, he enjoyed much of the presence and love of God in his own soul. He had a small but well selected library, and employed much of his time in the latter part of his life in reading his Bible and the most substantial theological works; and it was delightful to witness the pleasure he derived from books; how well he understood what he read, and with what tenacity his memory retained it to the last. The last few years of his life reminded one of Bunyan's Pilgrims in the land of Beulah. His was a happy old age; made so by the hallowing and soul-inspiring influences of our holy Christianity. He died more from the effects of old age than from acute disease. He was often very happy during his last illness. When asked if he felt that the Lord was with him, he replied, "O, yes! He is above, beneath and all around me!" He seemed to realize fully the great and final victory he had gained through our Lord Jesus Christ. He was nearly seventy-six years old at the time of his death. He was, in no ordinary sense, "a good man, and full of faith and the Holy Ghost."

Of the Methodist ministers, both itinerant and local, who labored so efficiently and successfully in planting a pure Christianity in this country, we need say no more. Of some of the original members of the Church we will say a few things.

Hannah Swayze was the daughter of Rev. Samuel

Swayze, the Congregationalist minister heretofore mentioned as the first Protestant minister who settled in the country. She was born October 27th, 1733; married Jeremiah Coleman, senior, March 2d, 1755, who died June 30th, 1777. She afterward married Richard Curtis, senior, September 25th, 1782, who died November, 10th, 1784. After his death she remained a widow until January 15th, 1807, when she died, aged nearly seventy-six years. She was first a Congregationalist, and after the dissolution of that Church—occasioned by the death of her father, its only available pastor—she maintained her Christian profession and personal piety until the advent of Tobias Gibson, when she united with the Methodist Episcopal Church. She was a burning and a shining light through all the trying scenes which intervened between 1773 up to the time of her death. The subject of experimental and practical piety was her constant theme. The vast concerns of the soul were uppermost in her mind. She was a wise and safe counselor in religious matters, but her greatest excellence, perhaps, was in the eloquence and power of her public prayers. Like Jacob, when wrestling in prayer with the Angel of the Covenant, she seemed to have "power with God and with men" in her approaches to the throne of grace. One thing remarkable in her prayers was, that she always besought the Lord to bless her children and her children's children with salvation from sin and with holiness of heart to the latest generation, and so far her prayers have been answered in a remarkable manner. Some of the most pious and influential Christians we have ever known have been found among her descendants, among whom have been

six or eight Methodist ministers and several Baptist ministers.

Her daughter, Penelope, who married John Griffing, was a woman of "like precious faith." Of her nine children who grew up to man and womanhood two became ministers, and all experimental Christians and members of the Church except one, who died when a young man, and he was so moral, and so much interested on the subject of religion, that hope was entertained of his final salvation. Most of her children lived to a good old age, and were prominent members either of the Methodist or Baptist Church to the end of life.

Another daughter of Hannah Swayze, by her marriage with Jeremiah Coleman, senior, by the name of Hannah, married Gabriel Griffing. She was also a woman of holiness, and was quite eminent through a long life for consistent and active piety. She was also greatly gifted in extemporaneous prayer, and was often called on in the social meetings of the membership to exercise her gifts in that capacity. Having lost her husband in Mississippi, she removed with her family, early in the present century, to the Prairie Jefferson, in what is now Morehouse parish, Louisiana, where she continued to live until her death in 1832. She came as near "exhorting all she had any intercourse with" as any one we ever knew, and such was the sweetness of her spirit and the outbursting affection of her heart that few attempted to resist her appeals. She lived in a separate apartment, but under the same roof with her son Jeremiah, who became a local preacher, and, like his cousin, Rev. James Griffing before mentioned, "was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and faith."

Their house was for many years the place of preaching for the Prairie settlers and class-room for the Church. She raised a family of grand-children who had lost both their parents, and often the first thing heard in the morning by the lodgers in the other end of the house was the lifting up of her voice in family prayer, and that, too, when she was more than seventy years of age. Hers, too, was a happy Christianity. She always wanted a sensible blessing at Church, and very generally got one, as often manifested by her expressions of joy and gratitude to her adorable Savior. She lived to see many of her descendants laid in the grave, but most, if not all, of them died in the Lord. Most of those remaining have become members of the Church of her choice.

Lydia Corey was a daughter of Richard Swayze, one of the original owners of the Mandamus Grant, and she lived to a very great age, near the first settlement of the grantees at Kingston, and was long "a mother in Israel." It is likely she was a member of the Congregational Church, but her spiritual condition was not satisfactory to herself until about the time of the Indian troubles, from 1780 to 1786. One of her grown sons was cutting down an [illegible] tree in a forest near the house to make rails, when all the men able to bear arms were called to rally and repel the Indians who were making a raid on Second Creek. He left his tree standing and went in search of the savage marauders and was killed. This sad occurrence roused up the religious feelings of Mrs. Corey to a high degree. She felt that the temporal and spiritual safety of herself and family depended on the protection and blessing of God, and in

order to secure what was so greatly needed, she betook herself to constant and earnest prayer; and in order to encourage her penitential and earnest feelings, she selected the base of the tree that her son was cutting down when he left home for the last time as her praying place. It was not long before the Lord blessed her with such a manifestation of his pardoning love, while she was praying at the root of the tree, that she was constrained to slap her hands together and shout "Glory to God!" at the top of her voice. The children and servants hearing her voice at a pitch of great excitement, and fearing that some evil beast had assailed her, caught up such weapons in the way of hoes, axes and sticks as they could most conveniently get hold of, and ran to relieve her; but when they got there she was all alone, rolling on the leaves, and shouting "Glory to God!" They at once demanded to know what was the matter with her! She replied, "O! I feel that the Lord has pardoned all my sins and wonderfully blessed me with a sense of his presence and love, and if you will all kneel down here by the root of this tree, I will pray the Lord to bless and save you every one!" From that hour Lydia Corey was a new creature in Christ Jesus, and she went on her way rejoicing. Time rolled on, and about fifteen or twenty years after Tobias Gibson visited Kingston and organized a Methodist Church, of which Lydia Corey and quite a number of the prominent females of the Swayze connection became members. They were a happy, Christian sisterhood, and not unfrequently in their meetings for social worship they would indulge their rapturous emotions in loud and appropriate language.

Some who had no such experience in spiritual enjoyment, and who were not familiar with such holy exercises, affirmed that it was nothing more than a sort of "wild fire" the Methodists had brought into the country. Lydia Corey promptly denied the charge, and declared "whether it was wild fire or tame fire, it was in the country long before the Methodists came here; that she had first experienced its raptures at the root of a certain ash tree near her residence, and had often enjoyed it afterward when there were no Methodists in the country." Toward the close of her protracted life, "in age and feebleness extreme," her mind closed in from the outer world and she seemed to forget everything—even the names and persons of her own descendants; but her relation to God and heaven never escaped her memory. She always seemed to be at home on the subject of the Christian's experience and the Christian's hope.

These are only a few examples of the "unfeigned faith" which was found among the godly women of those early days, and which, blessed be God! is still found among their descendants to the third and fourth generations. Did the writer think it compatible with his plan, he might say as much of the men of these ancient Methodist families as he has said of the women. Many of them were pillars in the Churches to which they belonged, and served their generation faithfully by the will of God, before they fell asleep in Jesus. Oh! that we, their heaven-favored offspring, may walk worthy of such ancestors, and serve God and his Church as faithfully in our generation as they did in theirs!

After glancing at a few facts and persons west of the Mississippi river, as illustrative of the state of society and the saving power of the Gospel, we will close our remarks about the rise and progress of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

We have several times alluded to the disorganized and rude state of society in Western Louisiana when it was first visited by the itinerant ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The mass of society was heterogeneous, but the elements of evil predominated greatly over the good. Some immoral practices were connived at not often tolerated in civilized communities. Among others was that of men and women entering into house-keeping arrangements together without being legally united in the bonds of holy matrimony. The parishes in those days were very large, so that citizens often lived from fifty to one hundred miles from the parish site, and the difficulty of obtaining license from a point so remote, or a suitable officer to officiate at the hymenial altar, was often rendered as an excuse for this state of affairs, but no doubt the ignorance and depravity which were prevalent were the principal causes.

As late as 1826 the writer preached and organized a society in the house of a man in Washita parish who had never been married to his house-keeper; with this exception they were well-behaved people, and well thought of by their neighbors; and his house being the most commodious for preaching purposes, was offered by him and accepted by the community as a place of worship until they could do better. There was soon an awakening in the neighborhood, and several

joined the Church. Among others the woman of the house became deeply concerned about her spiritual interests, and applied privately to know if she could be admitted into the Church, alleging her entire willingness to be legally married. We told her the marriage would have to precede her entrance into the Church. She then requested us to use our influence with her partner to have this stumbling-block removed and this reproach put away. We went to the field where he was at work, and proceeded to converse with him kindly but faithfully on the subject, and he seemed fully alive to the disabilities they were under, and the odium that necessarily attached to their manner of life, but offered as an excuse the difficulties that were in the way of a lawful marriage when they first agreed to live together, and now they had lived together so long he had not the courage to brave the excitement in the public mind that would be aroused by their marriage. We told him he had not a friend on earth that would not heartily commend him for it; for, with that exception, they were highly esteemed as neighbors and citizens; and, morever, the woman that ought to be his lawful wife seemed deeply concerned about her soul's salvation, and desired to join the Church, but could not be admitted unless they got lawfully married or separated forever. He came into measures, and promised to have the ceremony performed and the marriage recorded as soon as he conveniently could, but it was not done when we left the country not long afterward. We have introduced this subject not only as characteristic of the times, but also to show the reclaiming and renovating power of the Gospel among such people.

In early times, when the place now called Monroe, on the Washita river, was known as "the Post of Washita," there came into the vicinity, from puritanic New England, a young adventurer by the name of Sylvanus Bascom. He engaged in the ordinary pursuits of young men for money-making purposes, until he accumulated enough to get him a small tract of land on the western side of the river a few miles above "the Post," upon which he settled. He had been religiously brought up, and came from the land of churches and steady habits with a tender conscience and good moral character, but his "evil communications" with the society about "the Post" had "corrupted his good manners" until he fell an easy prey to the vices of the country. To other evil deeds he added that of entering into partnership with a transient housekeeper, with whom he seemed to live in the closest union in every respect except that of being joined in holy wedlock. They were somewhat thrifty, and soon were "well to do" for the grade of society to which they belonged. In this state of affairs Thomas Griffin entered the country as a pioneer preacher, and the scattered population was attracted from all parts to hear his heart-searching and powerful sermons. Among others, Bascom was an attentive and deeply interested hearer one Sabbath on the Bayou de Seard. Mr. Griffin "got on the sinner's track" that day, and pressed him closely in all his degrading, dangerous, and often fatal wanderings from God, and pointed him to the "burning lake" as the finale of his course, unless avoided by early repentance and thorough reformation. Bascom's conscience had long been stupified by sin, and he had seldom recurred of late to the pious lessons of his New

England training, but under this sermon he was greatly awakened, and the impressions of his earlier days were powerfully renewed. The sins of his heart and life came up in fearful remembrance, and he was ready to exclaim, "woe is me, for I am undone!" He determined at once to invite the preacher home with him and ask his counsel and prayers. Mr. Griffin readily consented to go, with the hope of accomplishing some good by the visit, seeing the man was evidently under awakenings. While Sally, the young and active housekeeper, was busy here and there preparing dinner, Bascom, with perceptible emotion, unbosomed himself freely to Mr. Griffin, giving him a history of his early religious training, and his wide departure from the counsels of his youth since his settlement in Louisiana, and finally his relation to the woman who was living with him. "Mr. Bascom," said Mr. Griffin, with his usual directness, "you can only have a choice of one of three alternatives. Either marry that woman and live with her according to God's ordinance, in the holy estate of matrimony, or put her away forever, or continue to live with her as you are now living, and both of you go to perdition; for to become a Christian in your circumstances is an utter impossibility." Bascom was truly penitent. Conviction had searched him out and entered deep into his soul. His sins rose up in sad remembrance and countless numbers, and he felt that further delay would be extremely hazardous, if not fatal to his salvation, and he determined to act promptly. He made known his feelings and purposes to Sally, and proposed that they should get married and live together lawfully, as their present relation would be an effectual

bar to their eternal salvation. She promptly rejected his proposal, and declared "she would not put her neck into such a halter; that for the present she was well enough satisfied with him and her present home, but times and men were liable to change, and she intended to have no legal barrier in her way, if, from any cause, she might hereafter desire to leave him." He told her then that they must, without hesitation, separate forever. She consented, and entered into the excitement of the new arrangement with a zest. Bascom made an honest division of all their household and kitchen furniture, even to the smallest articles, and by her request put her portion on board a trading boat which chanced to be at their landing, in which she also took passage to seek her fortune elsewhere. The crisis of the separation having passed, Bascom took up his long-neglected Bible and began to search its truth-telling pages, which he found "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction and for instruction in righteousness." He also became a man of habitual prayer, and betook himself to all the means of grace within his reach. But while he was yet bearing the burden of unpardoned sin and struggling against the pollutions of an unregenerated heart, he found himself involved in new difficulties and beset with additional temptations. As soon as it became known that he was without a housekeeper, others began to seek the vacated berth, and as he would make no advances, several of them made it convenient to visit him and offer their services. He firmly rejected all their proposals, told them he was, for all time to come, done with all such arrangements, and that he was determined, by the help of God, to lead a new life.

But the situation was desirable—there was a comfortable home for the one who might fortunately secure it—Bascom was more trustworthy and respectable than the vulgar and dissipated herd around them, and if he could not be brought to terms one way, other ways must be resorted to. In pursuance of their plan they would dress up in their most facinating style and spend a night or two at his house occasionally. "What am I to do in my difficult circumstances?" inquired he of Ashley Hewitt one day. Mr. Hewitt replied: "Brother Bascom, as a general rule it is best to assume a defiant attitude toward an enemy and overcome him by superior courage and strength, but in this case there is no safety but in flight. Pause to confer with flesh and blood, or to tamper a moment with the enemy, and you are a ruined man. Take to your heels in the hour of danger." Mr. Bascom adopted this advice literally, and resolved to avoid their company, in order to which he had to leave them in possession of his house on several occasions during the night. In the meantime the work of grace was taking deep root in his heart. He sincerely lamented his former course of wickedness, and after a sore struggle with his long-cherished evil habits and unbelieving heart, he was enabled to cast himself, all polluted and guilty as he was, on the atoning merits of Him "who died the just for the unjust." In that act the guilt of sin was removed, the power of sin was broken, and he rose up renewed in the spirit of his mind, feeling that he was a new creature in Christ Jesus. His soul was appalled when he looked back at the horrible pit from which he had just escaped, but when appreciating the fact that he had now "put on

Christ," and was in a state of actual salvation, his heart was filled with rapturous joy. Having been duly admitted to membership in the Church, he soon became deeply interested in all her movements. With what assistance he could get from a few poor neighbors, he soon put up a decent log Church, and supplied it with seats and pulpit, and it was long known as "Bascom's Church." His advancement in Christian experience and knowledge was steady and rapid, so that he soon became the leading Methodist in his community. There was such a change in the whole tenor of his life that all could see its reality.

The candidates for housekeeing gave him up as an unmanageable case, and began to feel a reverence for him as a man of God. A Church was soon organized in his neighborhood, and he was duly installed as a class-leader. His example was good, and his influence as an active Christian was felt throughout his community. He had no children of his own, but he took two orphan boys to raise, who, with his two servants, composed his family when we became acquainted with him in 1826. He generally had a plenty in store for man and horse, which, in addition to his amiable Christian character, made his house a pleasant home for the travel-worn itinerant preachers. Many were the tranquil and profitable hours we spent with Sylvanus Bascom in 1826. While there we could rest or read, pray or converse, or go bathing in the river, as we felt inclined. And what luxurious feasting on the best of trout! Such as we have never met with elsewhere. Having demonstrative evidence of our penchant for fish, he generally anticipated our visit by sending his

boys to the mouth of the Darbonne to catch a mess of trout for the preacher, which was served up in the most approved style and enjoyed to the full.

We have often reflected with pleasant emotions on the unusual circumstances attendant on one of our visits to Bascom's. There lived in his neighborhood a paralytic by the name of Holland, who was very poor. He had long led a dissolute life, but in his affliction and poverty he had sought the Lord, and found him "full of compassion and ready to forgive." He was admitted to Church fellowship, and went on his way rejoicing. He loved Christian communion, and one afternoon he hobbled over to brother Bascom's to spend the evening in holy converse. In the meantime Bascom's health was declining, and he felt that he was nearing his eternal home. As they sat in the deepening twilight recounting what great things the Lord had done for them, and how he had "begotten them to a lively hope —to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven" for them, the holy fire burned and glowed in their hearts until they were wrapped up in their visions of God. "Glory to God," exclaimed poor Holland, "I am so happy!" "And so am I; bless the Lord! O, my soul!" responded Bascom, and continued, "Nothing is wanted to complete our rapture but the presence of brother Jones. O, that he were here to share our joy! But we will see him to-morrow, and tell him about our happy meeting." On that day we had filled an appointment at Abram Pipes', and felt strangely prompted to proceed immediately to Bascom's that night. For more than half way we were troubled with the thought that perhaps we

ought to have spent the afternoon in pastoral vistations in the settlement where we had preached instead of seeking our own pleasure by hastening to Bascom's. But these teasing thoughts soon gave place to such an overwhelming sense of the presence and love of God that we alighted from our horse and rolled upon the grass in an ecstacy of unspeakable joy. This somewhat belated us, so that it was dark when we got to Bascom's. Our presence was not observed until we entered the door, when Holland vociferated, "Glory to God! here he is now!" "Hallelujah!" exclaimed Bascom, "now our joy is full." They clasped us in their brawny arms, and we all shouted. Yes, we had a real, outspoken, old-fashioned shout. How could it be otherwise when we were all as happy as we well could be in the body? The mystery of our afternoon experience was now solved—God had sent us on a mission of love to his afflicted children. Poor, paralyzed Holland—poor indeed in earthly goods, but rich in grace and an heir of God—soon passed away from the sorrow-stricken scenes of earth to his home in heaven. Bascom lived a few years to be purified in the crucible of sanctified affliction, and then entered into rest. After the lapse of near forty years the third one of that shouting trio is still here on earth, but has never yielded the hope of meeting Holland and Bascom in heaven. Glory be to God for the blessed prospect of that re-union!

Harbord Hood and his wife, formerly of Lake Providence, Carroll parish, Louisiana, should be gratefully remembered by their successors in the Methodist Episcopal Church in that region, for they were the first to introduce the Gospel, through the Methodist ministers,

into that portion of the State, and were its warm supporters until death. We think they were originally from Kentucky, and they must have settled on the Lake as early as 1800, if not earlier. We presume they had but little, if any property when they were married, and from the fact that Mr. Hood was without a literary education, we suppose his early advantages were very limited. But they were a very industrious and economical couple, and having lived near thirty years on the Lake before the land came into market, they cultivated the richest land in the world without even paying taxes on it. But, though the land was rich, the range boundless, and fish and game in great abundance, with the Mississippi river just at hand for navigation, they found it difficult for a quarter of a century to accumulate property much beyond the present wants of their family. We were first at his house in 1825, and our recollection is that he then had only about eight hands at work on his plantation. But when the lands came into market he accumulated property very fast. He entered these fertile lands to the extent of his ability, and, being an excellent woodsman, he was employed by other capitalists to locate and enter lands upon shares. Some of these lands he improved for his own use, and others he sold at very remunerative prices, so that he amassed a large fortune in a few years. In 1833 he remarked to the writer that it was as easy then for him to buy a good field-hand as it had been to buy a cow and calf a few years before. We knew him when he was compartively a poor man, and were familiar with the most important transactions which were evolved in the accumulation of his vast estate, and knew all to be the result of untiring

industry and successful financiering; for though he was uneducated, in the usual sense of the term, he was one of the best financiers, as well as one of the most energetic men in all the country, and could pick up a fortune where most men would not expect to find one within the range of possibility. But we look upon his connection with the Church and the aid he afforded in planting the Gospel in that region as of infinitely greater importance to earth and heaven than his financial success. Previous to 1825 the settlement on Lake Providence was isolated from all the world; perhaps up to that date a sermon had never been preached within forty miles of the place. Mr. and Mrs. Hood began to feel most sensibly their personal need of the public means of grace, in addition to having children grown who had never heard a sermon in the neighborhood, and perhaps nowhere else. This famine of the Word of the Lord could be endured no longer—they must have a preacher at any cost. Ashley Hewitt, who then resided at Prairie Mer Rouge, about forty miles distant, was applied to, and Mr. Hood proposed to settle him on a tract of land near his residence, and assist him in putting up the necessary buildings, if he would agree to preach for them as much as his feeble health would allow.

Mr. Hewitt looked on the proposal as a Providential call to carry the Gospel into "the regions beyond," and early in 1826 he left the Prairie Mer Rouge for his new home on Lake Providence. Mr. Hood's house was opened for preaching, and himself and wife, and several members of his family, with a few others in the neighborhood, soon united in forming the first Church

on the Lake. Let the future historians of the Church note the fact, that the Gospel was first preached, and the first Church was organized on Lake Providence by Ashley Hewitt in the private residence of Harbord Hood, in 1826. In November of that year, Alexander Talley, Presiding Elder of the Louisiana District, and the writer, had to start on horseback from north-western Louisiana on one of our pleasant little jaunts to Conference, which was to convene in December in the city of Tuscaloosa, Alabama, a distance, we suppose, of not more than five or six hundred miles. But what was that distance to men who had no families or local habitations, who carried their wardrobe and library in their saddle-bags, and whose home was in the saddle? A merry time we had in those days surveying the vast domain of the original Mississippi Conference. But to return to the subject: By the request of Mr. Hewitt we had sent forward an appointment for a two days' meeting at Lake Providence, which was to be the first ever held there. At night we preached in private houses, and in the day we held forth the word of life under a new gin-house belonging to Messrs. Martin and Keane. Dr. Talley met with a singular trial during the delivery of his sermon on Sunday. A woman, with a babe in her arms, took a seat just in front of the beam of timber upon which the Doctor stood, and soon after he announced his text the child began to cry lustily, and kept it up for three-quarters of an hour. The propriety of taking it out of the congregation never seemed to enter the mind of the mother until the Doctor, feeling quite discouraged in his effort to keep the attention of his auditors, paused and expressed a wish that it might

be quieted in some way. The woman rose up and walked a few steps to the rear of the stand, and after a few unsuccessful efforts to quiet her babe, came round in front again and said quite audibly, "I reckon I'll have to take this child home, for I can't make it hush." She was probably speaking to her husband, or some one else of her family, but the Doctor seemed to think she was addressing him, and after disavowing any intention to wound the lady's feelings, gave up any further effort to finish his sermon, and sat down. The circumstance was much regretted by the audience, as they had anticipated much pleasure in hearing a sermon from such a minister, and perhaps by none more than the mother of the screaming babe, who, in all probability, had seldom, if ever, enjoyed such a privilege before. According to previous arrangement, the writer then preached to a quiet and attentive audience. Mr. Hewitt spent three years on the Lake, after which it was regularly supplied by the Conference as other pastoral charges are. In the meantime Mr. Hood, with some assistance from his neighbors, put up a suitable Church, which was soon succeeded by the establishment of a camp-ground, so that Methodism was introduced with all its working apparatus, and many were the happy and prosperous times we had there among the early settlers. Mr. Hood's was headquarters for the preachers, and a more hospitable home they have never found in that country. The more we knew of this excellent man and his wife, the higher estimate we placed on their humble and unaffected piety. Most of their children preceded them to the spirit land, and we presume they have now but few descendants to represent them on earth. We hope

the Church and her ministers may always have nursing fathers and mothers in the region of Lake Providence, but it should ever be remembered that Harbord Hood and his wife were the first they ever had there.

We now propose to close our sketch of the introduction and early progress of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Mississippi and the Southwest. We might have extended these outlines indefinitely, but did not think it advisable to do so, and have, therefore, only selected, here and there, such representative characters and facts as would best illustrate the times of which we have written.

CHAPTER XI.

Presbyterian Church—First Introduced into Mississippi among the Chickasaw Indians, by Rev. Joseph Bullen, in 1800—Messrs. Montgomery, Hall and Bowman come as Missionaries to the Territory in 1801—Rev. Joseph Bullen Removes to the Vicinity of Natchez in 1803—Organizes Bethel Church in 1804—Bayou Pierre a few years after—Union Church in 1811—Rev. James Smylie arrives in 1805—Settles in Washington—Organizes Salem, afterward called Pine Ridge Church, in 1807—Subsequently Bethany and Amite Churches in Amite County, and Florida at Jackson, Louisiana—Rev Jacob Rickhow arrives in 1810, and Organizes Ebenezer Church in 1811—Rev. William Montgomery Returns in 1810—Removes his family in 1811, and takes the Presidency of Jefferson College at Washington—Rev. Daniel Smith settles as a Missionary at Natchez in 1815, and Organizes the First Presbyterian Church in Natchez in 1817—Mississippi Presbytery Organized in 1816.

The fifth Protestant denomination represented in Mississippi was the Presbyterian Church. Its first missionary was sent to the Chickasaw Indians, then inhabiting what is now North Mississippi He came on a reconnoissance to the Chickasaw Nation in 1799, and removed his family to his missionary station in 1800. In the same year the Synod of Carolina selected and appointed three missionaries to the American settlements in Southwestern Mississippi, and they arrived here early in 1801. Subsequently other missionaries came, under the auspices of various ecclesiastical bodies of the Presbyterian Church, until the formation of the Mississippi Presbytery, in 1816. Some of these original missionaries settled themselves permanently in the country, while others, after serving out the time for which they were engaged, returned whence they came, or settled themselves in other localities. It seems not to have been the plan of the first Presbyterian missionaries to aim at the immediate establishment of Churches, but to explore the country generally, preach the Gospel to as

many as they could, and collect congregations to be reported and turned over to their successors. This policy in the case of the Presbyterian Church may have been both wise and necessary, but it was quite different from the course pursued by the Methodist Episcopal Church, whose missionaries entered the field only a short time before those of the Presbyterian Church, but who commenced the organization of Churches soon after they came to the country; and this, perhaps, was one of the principal causes why the rise and progress of the Methodist Church was so much more rapid than that of the Presbyterian. The progress of the Presbyterian Church since its first organization in the country, however, has been steadily onward, so that in numbers it is only below those of the Methodist and Baptist Churches. We will mention the location of the first Presbyterian Churches in Mississippi as nearly as our information will permit, and also the order of time at which they were organized, so far as may be convenient to our general plan. It is our purpose to intersperse biographical sketches of some of the early ministers with our account of the organization of some of the first Churches, for their history is so intimately blended with their first pastoral charges in this country that we can not well do otherwise.

The first in order is the history of the Rev. Joseph Bullen, with his different fields of ministerial labor. A sketch of the life and labors of this excellent man and minister deserves a prominent place in the early history of Protestantism in our country. It is the good fortune of the author to live in the community where he spent the last twenty years of his life, and to have his young-

est son, Captain Samuel Bullen, for a neighbor at the present time, to whom he is indebted for some valuable dates and incidents, which will aid him very much in giving a brief outline of his father's connection with the early struggles of the Church in this country. Rev. Joseph Bullen was born in Worcester county, Massachusetts, about the year 1753, as we infer from the date of his marriage. He received his education at Yale College, and commenced his ministry before he attained the age of majority. In 1774 he was united in marriage to Miss Hannah Morse, of Sutton, Worcester county, Massachusetts, by which marriage they had five daughters and four sons, most of whom lived to be heads of families. Early in his ministry Mr. Bullen settled in Windham county, Vermont, where he spent about twenty years in the active duties of his vocation. About 1798 the Presbyterian Missionary Board of New York determined on establishing a missionary station in the Chickasaw nation of Indians, and engaged Mr. Bullen to go on a tour of observation and report the feasibility of the enterprise. In 1799 he made the journey, taking his son Joseph, then about sixteen years old, as his traveling companion. After spending some time in the Chickasaw nation, he returned to his family late in the year. Having reported favorably to the Missionary Board, he was employed by them to take charge of the mission for three years. His first son having died in infancy, and his three oldest daughters having grown up and married in Vermont, about the middle of March, 1800, he took his wife and five remaining children, and set out on his long and perilous journey to the Chickasaw nation. His course was by the city

of Troy, in the State of New York, and thence through Pennsylvania to Pittsburgh. At the town of Bedford, in Pennsylvania, they were detained some time by the severe illness of several members of the family; and an amiable, sweet-spirited daughter, just blooming into womanhood, died, and there she was buried among strangers, to await the day of promise when "the dead in Christ shall rise." The citizens of Bedford, by their unremitted kind attentions to the afflicted and bereaved missionary family, aroused in their hearts the liveliest and most enduring gratitude. Having arrived at Pittsburgh, Mr. Bullen, in keeping with the prevalent custom, procured a flat-boat, in which he descended with his family the Ohio and Mississippi rivers to the Chickasaw Bluffs, where Memphis now stands. The bluff was then surmounted by Fort Pickering, which consisted of a stockade fort and several block-houses, with a garrison of sixty or seventy United States soldiers, including officers, and was the door of ingress or egress to the Chickasaw nation. On the arrival of the missionary family at the fort they were received by the Commandant and soldiers with great cordiality, and were hospitably entertained during their brief stay. There being neither wagons nor wagon roads leading to the interior, Mr. Bullen procured a sufficient number of pack horses from the Indian traders to convey his family and chattels about one hundred miles in a southeasterly direction to the ancient Indian town of Pontotoc, near which he procured an old Indian settlement for a family residence. The Chickasaws generally received him kindly, and he immediately entered on his work. He engaged the services of an interpreter,

through whom he preached the Gospel to these heathen people. He also organized a rudimental school, which was successfully taught mostly by his son Joseph, and having a blacksmith and wood workman connected with the mission family, he succeeded to some extent in learning a few the use of tools. Some good was evidently accomplished by the mission, for, in addition to some improvement in agriculture and mechanism, several learned to read, and a few were admitted into the Church. Several white men and half-bloods were also duly married to Indian women with whom they had been previously living. But the influence of wicked traders, and whisky and rum, the bane of all that is promising and lovely, both among civilized and savage men, threw so many discouragements in the way that when Mr. Bullen's term of service expired, at the close of 1802, he concluded to leave the Nation. As he had left his little farm in Vermont unsold, he had, until about this time, intended to return, but the three missionaries heretofore mentioned as sent out by the Synod of Carolina, in 1801, had spent a night with him on their way to the southern portion of the Territory, which seemed to settle him in the purpose of going in that direction. Accordingly, in the early part of 1803, he left Pontotoc and descended to south-western Mississippi, and after some time spent in looking for a suitable location, he settled about twenty miles north-east of Natchez, in what is now the southern portion of Jefferson county, where, in addition to cultivating a little farm and occasionally teaching school for the maintenance of his family, he engaged in preaching in various neighborhoods within his reach. In order to show what was done by

others in preparing the way for the organization of Presbyterian Churches in Mississippi, it is proper to mention here that the three missionaries, Messrs. Montgomery, Hall and Bowman, heretofore mentioned as sent out by the Synod of Carolina with commissions to labor one year in the Territory, succeeded in collecting congregations at the following points, viz: Bayou Pierre, five miles southwest of Port Gibson; Uniontown, on the south fork of Cole's Creek; Washington, Natchez, Jersey settlement, and others still further south. When their term of service expired, and they were about to leave the country, the citizens of Natchez held a public meeting for the purpose of delivering to them a farewell address. This address was published in pamphlet form, and we are credibly informed that a copy of it is still preserved in the archives of the Mississippi Presbytery. This address, among other things complimentary to the missionaries, expresses a fervent desire for the settlement of ministers of the Gospel in the Territory, and the establishment of permanent religious influences among the inhabitants. On the return of the Missionaries to Carolina, they submitted a report, written by Mr. Hall to the Synod, giving a detailed account of their labors and of the inviting missionary field which they had explored. This report was published, and a copy of it is said now to be in the possession of Rev. Dr. Howe, of Columbia, South Carolina. If so, he would confer a great favor, especially on Mississippians, by having it republished, at least in the religious periodicals of the Church. The writer would prize a copy highly, and would gladly insert it in this book if he could get it in time. The report of the first missiona-

ries being favorable, the Synod continued to send out one or two annually, with commissions for one year, until Presbyterianism was permanently established in the Territory. Among the first successors of Montgomery, Hall and Bowman, we find the names of Brown, Mathews, Smylie and others.

We will now resume our narrative of Rev. Joseph Bullen. In 1804 he organized the first Presbyterian Church in the Mississippi Territory. The house was constructed of hewed logs, and was built near Uniontown, on land then belonging to Alexander Calender, but now to Richard Harrison. The Church was called Bethel, and except the family of Felix Hughes and a few others, most of the patronizing families of the Church were either descendants or connections of the Swayze family mentioned heretofore as having settled the Mandamus Grant in 1773, southeast of Natchez, and consisted of the Colemans, Calenders, Coreys and others. Bethel was kept up as a place of worship until about 1822, when, as a matter of convenience to a majority of the membership, it was dissolved, and Harmony Church was organized a few miles south of Fayette, to which they were transferred. In the mutations occasioned by deaths and removals, Harmony was finally dissolved by mutual consent, and the remaining members transferred to Ebenezer. Father Bullen, who was even then venerable with age, and weighed down with accumulating infirmities, was for many years the settled Pastor of Bethel Church. In our boyhood it was our privilege to hear him preach to his congregation, which, to a great extent, was composed of our near relations. Our recollection of him is that he was a

tender-hearted man, and manifested great affection for his auditors, and was more "a son of consolation" than "a son of thunder." Toward the close of life his voice became very feeble and his enunciation was very slow, but his sermons abounded with good sense, and were made up of doctrinal, experimental and practical Christianity. He lived within the bounds of his Bethel congregation, but he did not confine his labors exclusively to it, but continued to preach extensively in all the region round about. Three or four years after the organization of Bethel Church, having previously visited the congregation on Bayou Pierre, southwest of Port Gibson, which was composed of the families of Waterman Crane, Alexander Armstrong and others, he organized a Church there called Bayou Pierre. Their house of worship stood on the road between Port Gibson and the residence of Mr. William Young, where, it is said, the graveyard is still visible. This was the second Presbyterian Church organized in Mississippi. A part of this Church was ultimately transferred to Port Gibson, and Mr. Alexander Armstrong, one of its Elders, was the first Ruling Elder of the Presbyterian Church in Port Gibson; and it is probable that the members and that portion of the congregation living in toward the Mississippi river united, subsequently, in forming a second Church by the name of Bethel, which yet stands not far from Oakland College. Several other Churches were organized about the time that Bayou Pierre was, in various localities, but for the sake of continuing our sketch of Mr. Bullen unbroken to the close of his life, we will mention here that in 1811 he organized the Eighth Presbyterian

Church in the order of time, in what was called the Scotch Settlement, in the eastern part of Jefferson county. It was called Union, which name it yet retains. It has given name to the village of Union Church, near which it stands. This has generally been a healthy and prosperous Church. For many years the members held an annual camp-meeting, which was made a great blessing to the Church and congregation. Mr. Bullen, no doubt, assisted in the organization of other Churches, but, so far as we are informed, Union was the last one he organized and took the pastoral oversight of.

On the 17th of October, 1818, in the seventy-second year of her age, the wife of his youth, and the dear and faithful partner of his long and eventful pilgrimage, "died in faith," and was buried at Bethel. March 26, 1825, he also closed his sojourn on earth, and was buried beside his wife. Their graves are yet distinctly marked by plain head and foot-stones, with suitable inscriptions. The mortal remains of this venerable couple were interred immediately beside those of our great grandmother, the sainted Hannah Curtis, heretofore mentioned as one of the early members of the Methodist Episcopal Church. We would not have it otherwise. It is delightful to contemplate the promised resurrection of the "dead in Christ" in view of such a group. Many of Mr. Bullen's Bethel congregation repose around him, awaiting the time when both minister and flock will have to undergo their final scrutiny before the Judge of angels and men. How large a posterity descended from Mr. Bullen's three married daughters he left in Vermont, or his son Joseph, who married a Miss Ross, and settled somewhere in East Tennessee,

we do not know, but the Mississippi branch of his family is large, and most of them are professors of religion—the majority being members of the Methodist Episcopal Church—a beautiful and impressive illustration of the blessings promised to "the seed of the righteous." The second Presbyterian minister who settled permanently in Mississippi was Rev. James Smylie. He came as a missionary from the Synod of Carolina in 1805, and located at Washington, where, in 1807, he organized in that town, in the order of time, the third Presbyterian Church in the Territory, which was called Salem; but it was subsequently moved to a more central point on Pine Ridge, and has from the time of its removal until now been called Pine Ridge. It is now the oldest existing Presbyterian Church in the State, and still has, we presume, a more healthy and permanent existence than any other Church of any denomination in Adams county out of the city of Natchez. It has been blessed with a succession of faithful pastors and ruling Elders. We are informed that the records of this Church have been regularly kept with more than ordinary accuracy since 1807, and are now in the hands of Mr. James McCaleb, of Pine Ridge. The fourth and fifth Presbyterian Churches in the Territory, in the order of time, were Bethany and Amite, both of which were organized by Mr. Smylie, but precisely at what dates, or in what localities, except that they were both in Amite county, we have not the means of ascertaining at the present time. Mr. Smylie also organized, at an early date, a Church called Florida, near where the town of Jackson, Louisiana, now stands. As this Church was the sixth

in the order of time, it was organized previous to 1811. It was subsequently removed into the town of Jackson, and we presume still exists in the present Presbyterian Church in that place. In our next chapter we purpose to write sketches of the life and labors of Mr. Smylie and also of Mr. Montgomery. In this chapter we only speak of them in the character of early missionaries, and in connection with the Churches they were instrumental in organizing.

The third Presbyterian minister who settled permanently in the Territory was Rev. Jacob Rickhow. Previous to his becoming a Presbyterian minister he had been a member and minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The minutes of the Annual Conferences show that he was admitted on trial in the traveling connection in 1793, and continued to itinerate in and about the State of New York for seven years, during which time he graduated to Deacon's and Elder's orders, and was located in 1800. The reason he assigned in this country for leaving the Methodist Episcopal Church was, that he objected to her views of the possibility of falling from grace, and finally embraced the doctrine of the unconditional perseverance of the Saints. He came here in 1810, and commenced preaching in the Scotch settlement in the eastern portion of Jefferson county, where, in 1811, he organized Ebenezer Church, the seventh in the order of time, a little while before Mr. Bullen organized Union Church, heretofore alluded to. The standing of Mr. Rickhow in this country as a minister was good, so far as we know, and he did his share of pioneering through the new settlements of the Territory, and in serving distant Churches. His voice was

feeble, and his manner in the pulpit was not very lively, though his sermons were quite instructive. When we knew him in our boyhood, he seemed to be a man rather habitually dejected in spirit, and poor in worldly substance. He lived for many years in the vicinity of Port Gibson, and attained to a great age. He seemed to work slowly in his Lord's vineyard, but he lived to work a long time, and left the fruits of his labors in various localities. Ebenezer Church, which he organized in 1811, has maintained its existence ever since, and is still in a moderately prosperous condition.

The fourth Presbyterian minister who located permanently in this country was Rev. William Montgomery, one of the three first missionaries who came here in 1801. He returned in 1810 to select a suitable location, and being solicited to take charge of Jefferson College, at Washington, in 1811, he removed his family to that place and took the Presidency of the College, where he remained until the winter of 1813, when he fixed his residence at Selsertown, and took the pastoral charge of the Pine Ridge Church.

The fifth Presbyterian minister who settled permanently in Mississippi was Rev. Daniel Smith, who came as a missionary to Natchez in 1815, and in 1817 succeeded in organizing the first Presbyterian Church in that city. This Church has had a healthy, and at various times a decidedly prosperous, existence ever since.

In 1815 a new era commenced in the Presbyterian Churches in Mississippi Territory. They were too remote from other ecclesiastical jurisdictions of the Church to enjoy the full benefit of their patronage and oversight, and it was thought best to erect the eight

Churches already organized into a Presbytery. Accordingly the Mississippi Presbytery was set off by the Synod of Kentucky at a session, held at Danville, October 6, 1815. The following extract from the minutes gives us a correct history of the transaction:

"The Committee of Overtures reported a petition from the West Tennessee Presbytery, praying that a new Presbytery might be formed having for its eastern boundary the Perdido river, from thence by a direct line to Fort Jackson, at the junction of the Coosa and Talapoosa rivers, thence to the line of division between the Choctaw and Chickasaw nations of Indians, and along that line indefinitely, forming a division between the contemplated Presbytery and the West Tennessee Presbytery, to be known by the name of the Mississippi Presbytery, to be composed of Rev. Joseph Bullen, Rev. William Montgomery, Rev. Jacob Rickhow and Rev. James Smylie, which petition was granted; and it was ordered that said Presbytery hold their first meeting at Pine Ridge Church, in Adams county, on the first Wednesday of March next, and that Rev. Joseph Bullen, or, in case of his absence, the senior member present, preside as Moderator. Thomas Cleland, clerk pro tem."

In accordance with this action of the Synod of Kentucky, the following ministers and ruling elders met at Pine Ridge Church, March 6th, 1816, and organized the Mississippi Presbytery, with the ample boundaries above written, viz: Ministers, Joseph Bullen, William Montgomery, Jacob Rickhow and James Smylie. Rev. Daniel Smith, who was laboring as a missionary at Natchez, was also present as a corresponding member. Ruling elders present—John Grafton, of Pine Ridge Church,

John Bolls, from Bayou Pierre, and Daniel Cameron, from Ebenezer. "Where," the reader is ready to ask, "is the Perdido river, designated as the eastern boundary of this new Presbytery?" Look on your map away to the east of Mobile Bay. "And its western boundary?" Nowhere; or rather anywhere between here and sunset, where the missionaries might be able to go on their heavenly errand of preaching the "Gospel of the Grace of God." A large field this to be brought into cultivation by five resident ministers, about twenty ruling elders, and about two hundred Church members. But, blessed be God, the work, to a great extent, has been accomplished, and there are now but few places within the original bounds of the old Mississippi Presbytery where those who prefer her doctrines and Church government can not have access to her sacred enclosures.

CHAPTER XII.

Rev. James Smylie—Rev. William Montgomery—The Three Ruling Elders, John Grafton, Daniel Cameron and John Bolls.

Of the four ministers comprising the original Mississippi Presbytery, we have already given a brief history of Messrs. Bullen and Rickhow. In this chapter we will review, in a succinct manner, the prominent characteristics of the other two, Messrs. Smylie and Montgomery, and also those of the three Ruling Elders. Of the early history of Rev. James Smylie, the author regrets to say he knows nothing, nor has he been able, since he determined on writing this book, to obtain the desired information. The parentage, early training, awakening and conversion, accession to the Church and entrance into the ministry of such a man would, doubtless, make a very interesting and instructing chapter. We trust that some one may yet be able to furnish the Church with it. Of his history, as an able minister of the New Testament in this country, we profess to know something, having been familiar with his fame as a prominent, laborious and useful minister of the Presbyterian Church from early childhood. We have already stated the fact that he came as a missionary to the Mississippi Territory in 1805, and was the second Presbyterian minister who settled permanently in the country. Also, that he organized four of the first eight Churches represented in the first Presbytery south of Tennessee and west of Georgia.

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While Mr. Smylie was equal to any of his co-laborers in self-sacrificing care and toil to extend the Redeemer's kingdom, he was evidently their superior in literary

attainments and pulpit abilities. He was not only a fine scholar so far as rudimental scholarship is concerned, but he was a successful student and a close and accurate observer through life. No doubt he saw that in the order of Providence he was one of the leading ministers of his denomination in Mississippi, and that his responsibility was greatly increased on that account; hence the application and zeal he manifested in his profession, until the wearied wheels of his humanity stood still in death. Mr. Smylie was a practical writer, and was in the habit of committing the results of his observations of passing events to paper. We are informed that he kept an accurate journal from the time of his leaving Carolina as a missionary for Mississippi until near the close of his life, and that it is still in existence in the possession of his nephew, Rev. John A. Smylie, who has promised to prepare it for publication. We sincerely hope it may be done. It would be read with great interest, especially by the descendants of the old Mississippi and Eastern Louisiana families.

One very remarkable production emanated from his pen thirty or forty years ago, which produced quite a sensation in the Southwest. About that time but few professors of Christianity, either among the laity or clergy, thought of attempting the justification of African slavery, as it existed in the Southern States, from Holy Scripture. Most people, without pausing to examine the subject in the light of revelation, history and physiology, jumped to the conclusion that it was a great social, political and moral evil, which, while it had to be endured for the present, ought, as soon as possible, to be removed. While others were discussing

various schemes for gradual emancipation, colonization, etc., Mr. Smylie sat down to a quiet, honest and critical examination of the Holy Bible in reference to this absorbing subject. The result was that the conviction was forced upon his mind that the enslavement of the Hamitic race had been recognized as justifiable under every dispensation of the Church since the flood—that the holiest men mentioned in the Bible had been connected with it, without censure, and that the relative duties of masters and servants were clearly defined in the New Testament Scriptures, which was demonstrative evidence that the relation was recognized as compatible with Christianity by Christ and the Apostles. Whereupon he prepared and preached, in various places, a sermon in which he boldly defended the Southern institution of domestic slavery from the Bible. By the earnest request of many who heard it, this sermon was published in pamphlet form, and circulated generally through the country, and was the first, we presume, ever published in the Southwest on that side of the question. Mr. Smylie was, at first, severely censured by some, even among his clerical brethren, for the bold stand he took at so early a day on this subject; but being sustained, as he verily believed, by the Holy Scriptures, legitimately interpreted, he firmly maintained his position. He believed that the increase of biblical and historical knowledge among the people, taken in connection with the physiological and intellectual sciences, as developed in the different races of men, would all unite to convince the enlightened and reflecting part of his countrymen that he was right, though, perhaps, a quarter of a century in advance of the age. We would

not make the impression that Mr. Smylie was at all favorable to the continued intellectual and moral degradation of the African race, as it exists in the Southern States. So far from it, he believed it was the imperious duty of their owners to provide them with the means of obtaining such rudimental knowledge and moral and religious training as would raise them from their native barbarism to the enjoyment of our civilization and Christianity, as far as they might be capable of enjoying either.

Mr. Smylie lived to a good old age, and died greatly beloved by all denominations of Christians.

We have, in a previous chapter, mentioned the fact that three Presbyterian missionaries, by the name of Montgomery, Hall and Bowman, came to Mississippi in the spring of 1801, commissioned by the Synod of Carolina to itinerate through the Territory for one year, and that, at the expiration of their commission, they returned and submitted their report of the religious condition of the country, and the encouraging prospect of future success in preaching the Gospel among the Territorial settlers, which report was published. What became of Messrs. Hall and Bowman after their return to Carolina we are not informed. Of Rev. William Montgomery, their fellow missionary, we have learned much, not only from others, but from our personal knowledge of the man, and were we not such a prosy writer we could promise our readers something rich and edifying. We wrote to his son, Mr. Jas. H. Montgomery, late of Frankling Parish, Louisiana, to furnish us with a few dates and facts connected with the early history of his father. He informed us

that his father's papers were lost or mislaid in some way, so that he could only answer our questions from his recollection of what he had often heard him say on the subjects referred to. Rev. Mr. Montgomery was born in 1768, in the town of Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. About the commencement of the Revolutionary war his father moved to North Carolina and settled in Mecklenburg, soon after which he joined the Continental army, and took an active part in the trying scenes of the Revolution. About the close of the war he moved to Waxaw Settlement, in South Carolina. During his residence there his son William graduated at Chapel Hill, and soon afterward we find the family living in Georgia. While there Mr. Montgomery took his theological course under the preceptorship of Rev. Dr. Cummings, but at what institution we have not learned. It was soon after he entered the ministry that he came with Messrs. Hall and Bowman as a missionary to Mississippi, under the direction of the Synod exercising authority in South Carolina and Georgia. In order to avoid the hostile Indians inhabiting the Alabama part of the Territory, they took the usual course of going northward to Tennessee, and thence westward until they got opposite the Chickasaw and Choctaw tribes of Indians, and thence southward th ough those tribes to the Natchez district. They made the journey on horseback, with a pack-horse to carry their provisions and camp fixtures, as they had frequently to camp out in the wilderness. Even in old age Mr. Montgomery used to relate, with boyish gleefulness, an incident that occurred on this journey. A day or two before reaching any point where they could renew their stock

of provisions, it was fairly exhausted. Already they were suffering from the ceaseless cravings of a healthy appetite, stimulated by long rides, when they came up with a large, plump raccoon, and without pausing to examine the Levitical code as to whether he was "a clean or unclean beast," they ran him up a sapling and captured him. It was not long before the 'coon was stripped of his coat of furs and hanging on a spit before a newly-kindled fire. When sufficiently roasted the missionaries made a hearty supper, without bread or condiments of any kind, reserving a "reasonable portion" of the beast for next day. Mr. Montgomery often referred to the savory flesh of that "same old 'coon" as about the best he ever tasted. On their arrival in South Mississippi they made Natchez their headquarters, while each took a separate field and commenced his labors. Mr. Montgomery visited and preached in the settlements south of Natchez as far down as St. Francisville, and in some places was the pioneer of Protestantism. His presence, as a Protestant minister, was hailed with great delight by the Anglo-American portion of the population, most of whom were anti-Catholics; and in some instances people were known to walk twenty miles to hear him preach. After sufficiently reconnoitering the country the missionaries returned, as before stated, and made their report. Some time in 1803 Mr. Montgomery was married to Miss Elizabeth Lane, of Wilkes county, Georgia. How or where he spent the next six or seven years of his life we are not informed, but presume they were devoted to the active duties of the ministry in the State of Georgia. As we before stated, he returned to Mississippi in 1810 to

select a place for a permanent settlement in the country, and in 1811 he moved his family to Washington and took the Presidency of Jefferson College, and afterward the pastorate of Pine Ridge Church. In 1815, however, he settled his family in Jefferson county, not far from Ebenezer, and accepted the permanent pastoral charge of that Church and the one in the eastern part of the county called Union, where he passed the remainder of his long and useful life, which closed in 1848. After being duly installed pastor of these two Churches, he continued in that relation about thirty-three years; and by his personal piety, superior talents and ardent devotion to the interests of his charge, he secured such a hold on the affections and confidence of the majority that no one could ever supercede him, and no other denomination was ever able to get much foothold in all that region until after his death. His annual salary was generally small, and yet, because by industry, coupled by frugality, he had acquired a small estate, there were a few penurious souls who thought his stipend ought to be reduced because he had a little productive property of his own, and complained "their Gospel cost them too much." But whenever the matter was tested by a vote, a decided majority held on to their well-tried and faithful pastor. He did not, however, confine his labors exclusively to Ebenezer and Union, but made occasional preaching tours in various directions, and was personally known in most of the early Presbyterian Churches in Mississippi.

Mr. Montgomery was always very much pleased with the hallowing excitement and rich spiritual harvest of a well-conducted camp-meeting, and, in addition to holding

one for many years near Union Church, he was constantly in the habit of attending the Methodist camp-meetings, where he was a willing and effective laborer. While he was, so far as we know, an undeviating Presbyterian in doctrine and ecclesiastical polity, he displayed great catholicity of spirit toward his fellow Christians of every name, among whom he was much respected, especially by the Methodists.

In the early part of his ministry Mr. Montgomery adhered to the practice, so common in his Church, of reading his sermon from a manuscript previously prepared, but an incident occurred within a few years which occasioned him to abandon it entirely, except on some special occasions. When getting ready to commence the service one day, he was deeply mortified to find himself without his manuscript. There being no possibility of obtaing it in time, he determined to attempt an extemporaneous sermon, but was very much embarrassed in its delivery. This circumstance had a very different effect on him from what might have been anticipated. It brought him to the determination to throw off the habit of writing and reading his sermons, as a yoke of bondage he need not wear. He justly concluded it fettered both body and mind to be confined to a written discourse. In addition to this consideration he often had opportunities of preaching in school-houses and private dwellings among the new settlers, where no reading desk was available, and it looked awkward to be holding the manuscript in his hands. Moreover the ministers of other branches of the Church, whose early advantages had been quite inferior to his, could preach extemporaneously, and do

it correctly and fluently, and why could not he? The Rubicon was passed. For the next forty years, or more, William Montgomery was an extemporaneous preacher. After studying his sermons well beforehand he entered the pulpit without his notes, and peering into every part of his congregation, and treading over every inch of the rostrum from side to side, with earnest, impassioned eloquence, he poured forth the life-giving current of gospel truth, unfettered by the formality of rehearsing from a manuscript. We do not claim for Mr. Montgomery exemption from the invariable infirmities of our common humanity. He, like all other good men, had to pass through some very trying scenes in life's journey, and sometimes, for the moment, his spirit seemed to be ruffled, but his exhibitions of temper were as harmless as the passing meteor in a clear sky, and as soon spent. Even down to the close of his protracted and checkered life he was a good-humored and sweet-spirited old man. When he met his Christian brethren of other communions, denominational lines seemed not to be thought of, and they could not realize that they were not "one in Christ Jesus." He went down to his grave when about eighty years old. Calmly, gracefully and full of Christian hope and confidence was his descent to the tomb. His mortal remains sleep quietly under a plain marble slab, with an appropriate inscription, near old Ebenezer Church, and will doubtless "have part in the first resurrection."

Of the three Ruling Elders who assisted in the organization of the first Mississippi Presbytery, our personal knowledge of Daniel Cameron and John Grafton was limited, but all we knew of them, either personally or

by reputation, was in favor of their private and official Christian character. They were thorough Presbyterians, and manifested a steady and increasing interest in the prosperity of the Church.

With John Bolls, the other Ruling Elder referred to, we were well acquainted. He was a native Irishman, and one of the purest Christians we ever knew. He was early in the country, and had his full share of opposition and persecution from the Papists, and was an active partisan in the stirring scenes connected with the change of Government. His standing weight was only one hundred pounds, but, though so much under the ordinary size, he was one of the most active and indomitable men in the country, and seemed to be always "ready to every good work." He was a regular Presbyterian in principle and practice, but a man who "endeavored to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace," so that he could feel perfectly at home with all true Christians of every name, and hence he often took an active part in the social religious meetings of the Baptists and Methodists of his neighborhood. He was among the early settlers in the vast canebrakes and primeval forests east of the present town of Rodney, in what was then called the Petit Gulf Hills, and when there were just about praying men enough of all denominations to hold a weekly prayer-meeting, Mr. Bolls, though then perhaps seventy years old, was one of the most active men in those meetings. He read and sung well, and was decidedly gifted in prayer. His brief exhortations were also very appropriate, and his Irish brogue gave additional interest to all his public religious exercises. "Thou shalt reverence my sanctuary," was

a text that had great weight with Mr. Bolls, so that if he saw any ill-bred or thoughtless person behaving irreverently in the house of God, he would not subject the minister either to the mortification of reproving them, or quietly submitting to their indecorous conduct, but he would promptly take the matter into his own hands, and administer the necessary reproof, to which he would append an affectionate exhortation to amendment. We sincerely wish all our Churches had just such Ruling Elders in them as the venerable John Bolls was. He seemed to think if any one had the hardihood to misbehave in the sanctuary of God, he ought to have the moral courage to reprove them in a suitable manner for it.

The original Cane Ridge Church, in what is now Fayette Circuit, Mississippi Conference, was built, as a neighborhood Church, by people of different denominations, about 1819; and no one was more active in doing it, according to his ability, than Mr. Bolls; and when the house was finished, he said it ought to belong to somebody that would take care of it, and as the Methodists were the strongest, and had no house of worship near, he moved "Rev. Randall Gibson, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, be invited to preach a dedicatory sermon, and accept of the house in behalf of the Methodists," which motion prevailed with great cordiality, and there was organized one of the most productive Methodist Churches in the State. Mr. Bolls had a large family, and has left a numerous posterity in the country, everywhere respected for their enterprise, intelligence and piety. Most of his children united with the Baptist and Methodist Churches, more, perhaps, because those

Churches were convenient to them than from any disrelish to the Church of their father, and their descendants are still mostly found in those Churches. His youngest son, who married a sister of Rev. James Smylie, was long a prominent member of the Presbyterian Church, and was a worthy son of a noble sire. Mr. Bolls attained to an extraordinary age, being not less than ninety at the time of his death, and was a general favorite with all classes of the community. The visit of a prelate to our rural dwellings would scarcely excite more interest than the advent of this sweet-spirited and lively old gentleman. People are generally anxious to learn the secret of longevity—hence they inquire with interest into the history of the aged. "How have you made out to live so long?" inquired a junior of Father Bolls one day. "O, I was raised on Irish potatoes and stir-a-bout" was the laconic answer. It improves the heart to dwell upon the life of such a pure-minded, unsophisticated, diligent Christian, amid all the variations of a long sojourn on earth, as was that of this Ruling Elder. Peace to his memory! May his posterity follow him as he followed Christ.

CHAPTER XIII.

Causes of the Slow Progress of Protestantism in Mississippi and the Southwest—Catholicism—French Philosophy—Scarcity of Religious Literature—Natchez Under-the-Hill—St. Catharine Race-Course—Sabbath Breaking—Facilities for Acquiring Wealth—Demoralizing Influence of the Great Artery of Commerce.

The reader will bear in mind that our object has not been to give an extended history of Protestantism in Mississippi and adjoining Territory, but simply a concise history of its *introduction* into the regions specified. That self-imposed task is now accomplished, very imperfectly, no doubt, but as well as it could be done at this late date with the scanty materials at hand. The author believes that his dates and facts are substantially correct, and may safely be relied on by the present reader or future historian. He now proposes, in this concluding chapter, to specify some of the main causes which have hindered the more rapid spread of Protestant Christianity in this portion of the North American Union; for, we presume, in no other section of this Republic has evangelical Christianity in its progress met with more formidable obstacles than in Mississippi and Louisiana. Some of those obstacles have been of a general, and others of a local character. We will briefly refer to the most formidable of them. The country having been alternately under the French and Spanish governments, a large number of the original settlers, especially about the larger towns, and in the southern portions of Louisiana, were French and Spaniards, and were either professed Catholics or Infidels, according to the school of the French philosophy;

in either case strongly prejudiced against if not unchangeably opposed to the doctrines of the Reformation. Even after Catholicism ceased to be maintained by the Civil Government as the only allowable religion of the land, the Catholic population had their ecclesiastics interspersed among them, who were ever on the alert to oppose the movements of the Protestant Churches. Another opposing element was found in the fact that a large number of the American families had been so long deprived of the public means of grace and the usual sources of religious instruction, that while the older people had relapsed into cold indifference, if not habitual wickedness, a whole generation had grown up in ignorance, unbelief and immorality.

Another very formidable hindrance to the progress of pure Christianity grew out of the fact, that while the country was under a European Government, it was a place of comparative safety for all refugees from civil justice in the United States, whether they were debtors or felons. Hence, while many worthy adventurers came in quest of good lands for themselves and their posterity, too many came to avoid prosecution for various misdemeanors and crimes. Such were not very promising materials for the Gospel ministry to operate upon successfully. The want of Bibles and religious literature, and of educational advantages in general, was another very great impediment in the way of ministerial success. Even at this day we are often surprised to find in the libraries of some of our oldest and most influential families so little of that sort of religious literature which is calculated to enlighten the mind on the great truths of salvation, and to lead the

heart from sin to holiness, and from a life of folly and danger to one of consecration to God and a preparation for heaven, while we find them well-filled with works of fiction, many of which are poisoned with irreligion, not to say avowed infidelity, well calculated to becloud and mislead the minds of such as read them, especially the young.

Natchez was the centre of commerce for a large scope of country, and its surroundings were very unfavorable to the morals of the inhabitants, especially young men. There was that celebrated school of every grade of licentiousness, known as "Natchez under the hill," made up mostly in the days of the Provincial and Territorial Governments, of bar-rooms, gambling-houses and brothels of the vilest class. These haunts of hydra-headed vice were inhabited by the most degraded and lawless men and women, whose sole object seemed to be to beguile, entrap and ruin their heedless victims. Every available means was resorted to by these monsters of iniquity to draw the unwary within the circle of this maelstrom of vice and ruin. An opinion, as utterly at variance with the results of observation and experience as with the teachings of the Bible, prevailed even among the more refined and elevated classes of society in regard to the propriety and safety of visiting these abodes of licentiousness and crime. It was even gravely argued by some who ought to have known better, that it was well enough for young men and youths to make visits of observation to these suburban regions of death and hell, in order to see, that they might become thoroughly disgusted with such developments of fallen humanity; and many a heedless youth

went primarily to gratify "the lust of the eye," which led him by an easy and rapid process to the indulgence of "the lust of the flesh," and soon his honor was in the dust, his money in the hands of strangers, and "his feet went down to death, and his steps took hold on hell." We think it best never to see such polluting and dangerous exhibitions of the vilest passions of the most degraded and deeply-fallen of our race. A man can scarcely ever become all that he might have been after having his imagination polluted and his moral sense perverted by coming in contact with such debasing scenes. Another fruitful source of dissipation and irreligion was the celebrated St. Catherine race course, now known as the Pharsalia course, in the immediate vicinity of Natchez. When, or by whom, this race-track was originally planned and constructed, we can not tell. It is known to have been in existence before the close of the last century—perhaps as early as 1790, if not earlier—and has been kept in operation ever since. The general pretext for keeping it up has been to improve the blood of horses; but however proper and profitable it may be to improve the blood of horses, or innocent, under some circumstances, to test their fleetness and powers of endurance, truth compels us to say that the surroundings of the St. Catherine course have always been very unfavorable to good morals and true piety. Like the fabled Upas tree of Java, it has poisoned the moral atmosphere in all the region round about. But few men once in the habit of mixing in the excitement of the Pharsalia course have ever embraced religion. They seem to get in a short time at a returnless distance from the

saving influences of the blessed Gospel of the grace of God. Another fruitful source of irreligion has been the unusual amount of Sabbath-breaking in the Southwest generally, especially in Louisiana. By Sabbath-breaking here we do not simply mean the less offensive forms of that demoralizing and damning vice as found more or less in all Christian countries, but Sabbath-breaking in its broadest and worst forms. As if by common consent many of the Southern planters pay but little attention to the claims of the holy Sabbath. If they suspend their regular work, it is only to fill up the day with other engagements equally at variance with the Scriptural law in regard to "keeping the Sabbath day holy." Many of the sugar planters, especially in southern Louisiana, are notoriously addicted to a violation of the fourth commandment in the decalogue. They seem to think it essential to success to cultivate their cane and manufacture their sugar on the Sabbath as on other days.

Sabbath-breaking, in all its most aggravated forms, has existed in New Orleans, so far as we know, from the foundation of the city. Now we hold that the Gospel can not make much progress among a people who persist in the commission of this demoralizing vice with the pertinacity of the people in the Southwest. How many of the sad calamities that have fallen on our country have been Providential visitations for this sin is not for us to determine. One thing we do learn from the Bible is, that this is one of the sins that God often punishes people for in this world.

The facilities for acquiring wealth in Mississippi and Louisiana have, no doubt, incidentally, greatly hindered

the advancement of the Churches. The climate is salubrious, the land fertile, the great staples of the country command remunerative prices in the markets of the world, the lines of commerce are easy of access, so that almost every one who will use common industry and economy in this country can acquire wealth. The consequence has been that the minds of many have been so completely absorbed with the idea of acquiring wealth, that they have got quite beyond the regenerating and sanctifying influences of the Gospel.

Finally, the mode of travel, with its attendant allurements on our great commercial thoroughfare, has exerted its influence against the progress of an unworldly and spiritual Christianity, especially on the margin of the Mississippi river. Vice, in all its most popular and fascinating forms, has ever been rife on our Southern steamboats, and too many people look on a steamboat trip not only as a holiday from the ordinary business of life, but as a respite from the restraints of morality and the duties of religion; hence many indulge in irreligious practices on such a voyage that they would not indulge in in other places; and the consequence is their moral feelings are blunted, their religious vows are violated, and they are led into a state of hard-heartedness not easily reached by the influences of the Gospel ministry.

Taking all these considerations into the account, with others that might be mentioned, we are constrained to acknowledge that Gospel seed was never sown upon a more ungracious and unproductive soil. Instead of being found simply in its native state, which at best is bad indeed, it had been pre-occupied and poisoned by noxious weeds and brambles, which were exceedingly

difficult to subdue and displace. In other portions of the North American Union—especially in the Middle and Western States—the laborers in the Lord's vineyard had virgin soil to cultivate, and while, in the the first and second decades of the present century, they were numbering their converts by scores and hundreds, their co-laborers here, with more self-sacrifice and wasting toil, were gathering only a scanty harvest. Fortunately for those whose lot it has been to labor in this unproductive region, the Gospel method of distribution is to "reward every man according to his labor," and not according to his success. But, notwithstanding this formidable array of opposing obstacles, the original Churches in Mississippi and Louisiana, in their denominational character, have maintained their vitality, and exhibited unmistakable signs of steady, though often slow, progress. May their vitality be evermore preserved, and their progress be onward, until "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."